BLURRING BOUNDARIES:

SHIFTING PERCEPTIONS OF FEMININITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

A Thesis

by

TARA MARIE SCAMARDO

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2006

Major Subject: History

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	James Rosenheim
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ABSTRACT

Blurring Boundaries: Shifting Perceptions of Femininity in the Context of the English Civil War. (August 2006)

Tara Marie Scamardo, B.A., The University of Texas at Austin

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. James Rosenheim

The English Civil War represents a liminal period within the history of the nation, one that offered many opportunities for experimentation with gender roles in social institutions. This historical episode had no universally legitimate authority, in either the government or the church, and the population had to deal with the resulting confusion individually. In comparing the writings and actions of women during this period with the popular publications of men that described and prescribed women's behavior, I argue that a significant number of men and women disregarded prescribed gender roles out of necessity. The major themes of this thesis involve the relationship between power and gender, as seen through contemporary language and writing that reveal how English culture viewed women acting in "masculine" endeavors in a time of crisis. Any perceived threat to the social order or the gender hierarchy of early modern England caused anxiety, but the actual challenges to this social organization posed by the Civil War provoked a substantial backlash. However, the women who acted in the war in public developed an identity independent of their culturally subordinate status.

In order to substantiate this argument, this thesis discusses the fluid nature of gender, including the significant changes that resulted within the decades of the Civil War, as it was depicted in seventeenth-century England. Using primary documents, including letters, pamphlets, diurnals, and diaries, I show how the gender roles created by the church, state, and society were contradicted by the reality of the behavior exhibited by the participants in the English Civil War. I examine both women who acted within the traditional confines of femininity and those who transgressed these boundaries. Close attention is paid to women's activities in the areas of defense, religion, and politics. In conclusion, the thesis examines the ways in which historians have sought to interpret this period and place the actions of women within a patriarchal context. Possible challenges to the gender hierarchy caused great anxiety amid early modern England, but actual transgressions of gender roles, which occurred during the English Civil War, prompted a reevaluation of femininity.

DEDICATION

In memory of John O. Butler (1914-2005), and Barbara Corrales (1944-2006). Binky was the most wonderful grandfather, listener, and supporter possible, and Barbara acted as an amazing mentor, friend, and colleague. I thank them for blessing me with their love and encouragement while writing this thesis.

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To my family and friends, I do not know how to express how much you mean to me. For supporting me through the good days and the bad, the celebrations and the tragedies, I am incredibly appreciative. As Epicurus said, “It is not so much our friends' help that helps us as the confident knowledge that they will help us." I have been blessed with numerous relationships that allow me to explore new ideas without ever fearing the loss of that which matters the most, those I love.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: GENDER IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

The English Civil War disrupted politics, religion, economics, and personal relationships for both men and women. This disruption resulted in a national identity crisis and blurred established national normative boundaries. The time of the English Civil War revealed much distrust and skepticism toward tradition and conventional authorities. Significantly, early modern England needed an ordered society and a unified people to respond to the persistent questions on the role of family, state, religion, and gender.[1] People looked to religion, philosophy, tradition and the government to make sense of their environment and their place within it. In the seventeenth century, the state needed to make sure the population felt attached to the social structure and conformed to its demands, in order to ease the trials of governing such a diverse population. This meant that each member of the population had an approved role to fulfill as a subject and a duty to uphold in society. This structuring of English society greatly influenced an individual's expectations and behavior. Specifically, the gender hierarchy played a large role in social institutions, such as the family, the church, and the government. However,

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This thesis follows the style of *The American Historical Review.*

[1] Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing, eds. *Women's World in Seventeenth-Century England: A Sourcebook* (New York, 2000), 9. These authors expressed the well-known belief from which this paper stems that "Early modern England was a society profoundly concerned with the need for order." Many other historians of this period express a very similar basic understanding of the need for social order. See also Keith Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects," *Past and Present,* No. 13 (April 1958): 42-4.

the events of the English Civil War challenged the population's understanding of authority and resulted in a period of liminality. The confusion of this period allowed for transgressive behavior, and many groups ignored traditional social boundaries in an attempt to figure out their place within the nation.

This thesis aims to show that the disruption of the war affected all women regardless of their class, allegiances, or status. The women presented in this thesis had nothing in common except the fact that they all dissented from the contemporary gender hierarchy of early modern England. The similarities in their writings did not result from a concerted effort. Instead, the war blurred ideas of gender to an extent that women seized the opportunities to express themselves regardless of prescribed gender roles. The methodology used to substantiate this argument involved looking at a vast variety of writings by women from every walk of life and persuasion. By taking from so many different literary genres, this thesis shows that the women who publicly participated in the events of the English Civil War were not just singular eccentricities. Rather, the conception of what it meant to be a woman shifted as the boundaries between genders blurred.

The nation's identity, and with it the nation, went into crisis when the king asserted his controversial right of divine and absolute rule and ignored the representative and advisory body of Parliament. Charles I ruled without it for eleven years, provoking unrest within the elite of the nation. When Charles had to assemble Parliament years later, Parliament addressed several unresolved issues including the legitimacy of various taxes and the course of the wars with Scotland. Parliament, which represented the powerful landowners of society, refused to submit to the unqualified power of the

monarch and debated the nature of legitimate rule within England. King Charles challenged the members' perceptions of themselves and their roles within the country and forced men to question the very nature of a patriarchal government. After the King attempted to arrest several members, the Parliament began to declare itself as a servant of the nation rather than of the king. The men of Parliament were the patriarchs of their homes and counties; thus they were familiar with displaying their masculinity through ruling. In effect, the men in Parliament could not reconcile the need to be masculine and rule, or submit to the absolute rule of the king and act as the feminine actors of the government and submissively be ruled. Parliament then raised an army, and the battles began. Although both parties stated the need for peace, each wanted success on its own terms, and the ongoing negotiations between the Royalists and the Parliamentarians proved fruitless. Diplomatic debates led to the dramatic conclusion of bloodshed and regicide.

Many historians have provided analyses of the social issues of the English Civil War. Hugh Trevor-Roper and Anthony Fletcher found the religious environment of the time as the cause of the war.[2] Brian Manning wrote about the way in which the political issues of the government provided the largest role in the nation's struggle.[3] Christopher Hill illustrated the way that the environment of the war raised questions about the nature of order in all arenas, including economic, educational, religious, as well as political

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[2] Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud, 1573-1643* (London, 1940). Anthony Fletcher, *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (New York, 1981).

[3] Brian Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution, 1640-1649* (London, 1976).

ones.[4] Recently, historians have begun to study the effects of the war upon gender. This thesis contributes to the increasing work of gender history by claiming that the questioning of traditional authority extended to a blurring of boundaries within gender roles. This explains the exceptional actions of women and men during the war.

Men and women both experimented with ideas about social organization. Law and custom prohibited women from acting in the same capacity as men in many public social realms, such as politics. Prior to the war, the possible threat to the gender hierarchy caused anxiety. However, the English Civil War marked a time of disorder, and the many changes within the political, social, and economic realms of the entire seventeenth century allowed women various opportunities to discover their individual interests and then act according to them. In the early modern world, bodies and minds, religion and politics, individual and community, and business and social lives remained intertwined in common life experiences. This context caused great anxiety when the gender order was challenged during the war. After the cessation of the war, a strong reaction limiting women's public activities demonstrated the hostility that the authorities felt towards social disorder.

To demonstrate the confusion concerning gendered identities and the blurring of gender boundaries, the arguments of the thesis concentrate on the writings of the period. Both contemporarily published literature and unpublished correspondence comprise the bulk of sources for this study. The way in which people use language to express

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[4] Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution* (New York, 1972).

themselves reveals much about the concerns and attitudes of the writers. It also gives subtle, and sometimes palpable, insight into the cultural values of a period.

In order to understand the blurring boundaries of gender, it is important to understand the importance of gender in early modern England. Masculinity clearly dominated and demanded the subjection of the feminine. Gender historian Diane Purkiss has recently suggested that these gendered ideas led to great tension in the early seventeenth century, when both the monarchy and Parliament felt the need to dominate or act as the masculine personage in the governmental relationship.[5] The widespread division and discord held significant repercussions for relationships throughout the country. If the family represented a microcosm of the kingdom, the questioning of power within the kingdom theoretically affected the hierarchy between husband and wives and all oppressors and oppressed.

Gender also played a very important role in how a monarch or governmental body presented itself as worthy of the power it held. England's leaders, both male and female, had always promoted themselves as masculine. The English population thought it very important to have monarchs who ruled with the masculine qualities of rationality, justice, and strength. Only then could they demand the respect needed to command loyalty from their subjects. In turn, as Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing suggest in their compilation of seventeenth-century documents, the public's perception of the

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[5] Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender, and Politics during the English Civil War, (*New York, 2005), 1-2.

ruler's behavior greatly influenced the ruler's own self-identity.[6] In the early modern period in England, any authority must act in a masculine capacity, and, more importantly, encourage the population to see him or her as masculine to rule effectively. For example, even the greatest monarch, Queen Elizabeth, extolled her masculine virtues. At this point, contemporary definitions must suffice to explain the significance of gender and ideas of masculinity and femininity played in the Civil War era. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) provided a seventeenth-century definition of "masculine" as "characteristic of or befitting a man" with a citation of Thomas Fuller, "The Queen…acquitted Her self more than Woman in her Masculine resolutions."[7] A masculine virtue referred to any good characteristic regardless of the sex that portrayed it. As will be seen, femininity represented the undesirable characteristics of a person, or those opposite to masculinity.

Despite the restrictions that came with being perceived as feminine, women did have a place but not a powerful one as defined by traditional historians. For my purposes, the word "gender" will emphasize the cultural and social attributes of a human being rather than a biological classification, although seventeenth-century contemporaries did not make this important semantic distinction, as the theoretical perception did not exist. A major debate among gender historians involves how to analyze women's actions with respect to their culture. Should they be regarded as

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[6] Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 243. This seems to reinforce the idea that acting with a gendered appearance and proper behavior sufficed to immediately satisfy and appease the minds of the population without forcing them to delve deeper into the philosophical justifications of authority until that authority is publicly challenged, such as in a Civil War.

[7] "Masculine," *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford, 2005), http://dictionary.oed.com. (5 January 2006). The quote is from Thomas Fuller, *The Church History of Britain* (1655).

passive victims or active agents of history? Traditionally, written history neglected women due to their lack of visible power, influence, or activity in the records. The women of early modern England were typically dismissed as simply following the prescribed roles of patriarchy. Pioneer women's historians Ann Gordon, Mari Jo Buble, and Nancy Schrom Dye argued that historians viewed woman as a "trans-historical creature" and as an object of history rather than a historical subject.[8] Therefore, as a result of changing attitudes, the concepts of "power" and "influence" as used by scholars have recently been in flux, and many historians have redefined the words to account for the examples they have found within the archives and records of early modern Europe. The history of the English Civil War contains remarkable challenges to the gender order of English society.

The academic literature pertaining to the role of gender in society provides a clarification of the manner in which the English Civil War blurred the definitions of "masculine" and "feminine." A brief review of the literature pertaining to gender history marks the progression of issues that has led to the ideas behind this thesis. Natalie Zemon Davis defined the central issue of gender historians in her article, "'Women's History' in Transition: The European Case."[9] She contended that the most important change of the 1970s involved the emerging realization that family and gender relations did not represent a static feature of the European past. However, her most important

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[8] Ann D. Gordon, Mari Jo Buble, and Nancy Schrom Dye, "The Problem of Women's History" in Berenice A. Carroll, ed., *Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays* (Chicago, 1976), 75.

[9] Natalie Davis, "'Women's History' in Transition: The European Case", *Feminist Studies* 3, No. 3/4 (Spring 1976).

contribution to gender history lies in her definition of the field. She strongly urged future historians to study the significance of biological sex and how relations between men and women have changed through history. That same year, Joan Kelly stated her goal of restoring women to history and history to women.[10] She claimed that the relations and hierarchy between the sexes always represents a social construct. With the assumption that gender identities signify power relationships, she defined femininity "as an internalization of ascribed inferiority which serves…to manipulate those who have the authority women lack."[11] Emphasizing interdisciplinary concepts for interpreting sources, such as "vantage point" and "centrality of consciousness," she reevaluated the writing of history.[12]

Susan Amussen applied the ideas of a relationship between gender and class, and men and women, to early modern England in *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England*.[13] She asserted that "Authority is socially constructed"[14] and argued that the concepts of gender hierarchy and power merely represented a scheme generated by the elites' desire for social calm, a scheme that in no way reflects the attitudes and behavior of the majority of the English population. Amussen challenged the idea that patriarchy worked as both a necessary governmental and familial

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[10] Joan Kelly, *Women, History, and Theory* (Chicago, 1984).
[11] Ibid, 6.
[12] Ibid, xx.
[13] Susan Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York, 1988). Joy Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville, Va., 1992) also analyzes the disparity between prescribed behavior and recorded actions, which she calls "the problem of male dominance." Wiltenburg bases her research on many of popular pamphlets. See also Julie Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy: Gender and the Politics of Household Authority in Early Modern France* (State College, PA, 1998), in which she also debates prescription versus practice within patriarchal systems and discovers "the hidden power" of women.
[14] Amussen, *An Ordered Society*, 187.

arrangement, with the king at the head of the nation as the father ruled the household. Specifically, she states that the ideas of hierarchy began to be stressed out of the necessity for an obedient people in the early modern period, rather than any innate belief of humanity in male superiority. Amussen explains that as villagers dealt with the dramatic changes of the early modern period, such as population growth, inflation, Puritanism, and gaps in wealth, a great fear of confusion grew within England.[15] Amussen persuasively states that the common man rarely acted as a king of the home, and the subordination of women in men's eyes was only an illusion of advice writers and theorists. In her analysis of the power that women possessed within a household, she uses court cases to show that husbands valued fidelity more than obedience in a wife. She further claimed that the prevailing stereotypes of the submissive and silent wife stood in direct contrast to the economic functions a wife performed. Amussen successfully added to the debate on women's roles in society as active agents of history by showing that the power that husbands had over their wives was partly deceptive, at least within England.

Historians have discovered that power and authority were fluid concepts in early modern Europe. The *OED* defined power as "the ability to do or affect something or anything, or to act upon a person or thing." However, the first example of using the

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[15] To clarify why there existed a need for a social order and why the governmental authorities began to strengthen the concept of hierarchy, Amussen explains that the leaders linked the family organization with politics by stating that the household represented a microcosm of the state. They hoped that villagers could grasp the ideology of patriarchy needed to bolster their faith in the government and their obedience to the authorities.

word “power” within a political context is John Locke at a later date.[16] As early modern England presented no single source for authority, women had several opportunities within different arenas to articulate a limited form of autonomy. Women rarely challenged gender assumptions explicitly, but their sporadic yet consistent refusals to defer to tradition reflect the instability of the English Civil War and the mid-century understanding of gender. While women certainly challenged the social order prior to the English Civil War, their entrance into the public realms during a time of disorder sparked a reconsideration of contemporary ideas of gender.

It is important to understand that the word “gender” has also evolved greatly, both in definition and in connotation, since the period of the English Civil War. In fact, the common usage of the term gender has changed substantially just in the past century. In the 1940 edition of Fowler’s *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, gender is defined as “a grammatical term only. To talk of persons or creatures of the masculine or feminine gender, meaning of the male or female sex, is either a jocularity (permissible or not according to context) or a blunder.”[17] This seems to have represented the usage of the word in seventeenth-century England. The *OED* lists the definition of "gender" as "kind, sort, class" as in "The governour…is a servant of the ship…neither he from a mariner in *gender*, but in kind" for the mid-seventeenth century.[18] Only centuries later

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[16] “Power,” *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford, 2005), http://dictionary.oed.com. (5 January 2006).

[17] Cited in Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review* 91 (Dec. 1986), 1053.

[18] “Gender,” *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford, 2005), http://dictionary.oed.com. (5 January 2006). The sentence comes from Prynne, 1643 with emphasis added. A major shift in the use of "gender" can be surmised from a comparison of the exemplary sentences of 1632, "Here's a woman! The soul of Hercules has got into her. She has spirit, is more masculine than the first gender" to Lady Montagu

did it correspond to a classification system for biological sex rather than its primary usage in grammar. However, the words "feminine" and "masculine" had opposing significance for seventeenth-century England. "Feminine" always meant "of a woman," but it could apply to either sex as a deprecating description of a person, with "masculine" used as a complimentary adjective. For example, Lord Clarendon wrote of a colleague in 1647, "He was of so unhappy a feminine temper, that he was always in a terrible fright."[19] The manner in which men and women wrote in the early modern period using these words shows the ease with which the definitions and connotations of these words could be manipulated. Perhaps with these historical definitions in mind, feminist scholar Judith Butler condemned the usage of such words as arbitrary and man-made, without a substance of truth.[20]

Gender not only played a large role in conceptions of a hierarchical social order, it also helped individuals understand their personal place within the world. As Joan Larsen Klein so bluntly yet accurately stated in 1992, "Women in early modern England were a subject of abiding interest to men."[21] Men felt the need to understand and define women as a way to understand themselves. By controlling and characterizing women and their appropriate behavior in a rigid manner, men could comprehend what they were

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of 1709, "Of the fair sex…my only consolation for being of that gender has been the assurance it gave me of never being married to any one among them." The connotations of the words have shifted greatly.

[19] "Feminine", *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford, 2005), http://dictionary.oed.com. (5 January 2006). Edmund Spenser provides a description of how these words were used to describe objects and not to classify humans from 1590. In a description within *The Fairie Queene,* of an inanimate object, he wrote, "The one imperfect, mortall, feminine, th' other immortall, perfect, masculine."

[20] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, 1999), 16. She identifies a major problem in understanding gender within the context of the available language, since definitions change over time and words are "value-laden" by men.

[21] Joan Larsen Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows, Daughters, Wives, and Widows: Writings by Men about Women and Marriage in England, 1500-1640.* (Chicago, 1992), ix.

not. This simplification of a very complex psychological issue helps to explain the definitions of masculinity and femininity. Another gender historian, Bonnie Smith, provided an understanding of masculinity as "a privilege that allows the suppression or devaluation of other voices."[22] The association of male with master had dramatic effects on those who did not practice this philosophy. Phyllis Mack elaborated on this gender differentiation by describing two types of power directly determined by gender. Masculine power acted in social and political spheres, or "exercised in daylight." Feminine power encompassed spiritual authority, which could be godly or demonic, with the morally ambiguous connotations attached to spirituality.[23]

Many scholars from several disciplines have contributed to the theory of gender boundaries and the ways in which they blur. Thomas Laqueur used his medical background to ponder the inconsistencies in prescribed attitudes of men toward women. *Making Sex* analyzes the manner in which popular perceptions of women changed with anatomical discoveries. He states his perplexity at the way in which men could alter their justification for a hierarchy in the face of new knowledge yet refuse to acknowledge a problem with the hierarchy.[24] Judith Butler's work on gender theory presented several new factors to the study of gender history that complement Laqueur. She explained that a threat to the binary system of gender based on biological sex

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[22] Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), 69.

[23] Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth Century England* (Berkeley, CA, 1992), 45.

[24] Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA 1990).

excused men's oppressive behavior as preserving the social order.[25] Butler unequivocally argued that the attempt by feminist historians to search history for "utopia" would always prove futile.[26] She examined the role that a feminine identity existing solely on the subversion of women had on ideas of femininity and female values. Although she stresses that she cannot universalize her theory of the subjection of women, she introduces a valuable perspective on why a gender hierarchy might exist. She asserts that normative society, or heterosexual male-dictated society, polices gender to ensure order.[27] Being of a gender, in Butler's case feminine, is an effect of being the "other" of the oppressor, so "gender is not to culture as sex is to nature."[28] These ideas resound consistently with the writings of seventeenth-century Englishwomen. As Diane Purkiss explains, "The psyche, like the subject, is historically produced, because it is the outcome of language and experience, neither of which are immune to the fluctuation of historical change."[29] These women did not view themselves as a collective category, rather they believed that they played a vital, frequently complementary, yet often dismissed, role within society. Several of these Englishwomen acted very independently in the English Civil War, despite the social and cultural restrictions placed upon their sex.

As historians discover more about the vital roles women played in early modern society, they have had to change their ideas about the concept of power. Using a

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[25] Butler, *Gender Trouble.*
[26] Ibid, 46.
[27] Ibid, xii.
[28] Ibid, 11.
[29] Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, 2-3.

deliberately post-structuralist method, Phyllis Mack wrote of Quaker women in seventeenth-century England. She claimed the necessity of breaking down traditional categories, such as masculine and feminine, to understand the truth of social relationships.[30] Certainly, women did not enjoy many of the rights that men did, but that did not stop them from exerting their influence in several aspects of their lives. Yet, many scholars before the social history movement had taken for granted that women had no way to express themselves within the male-dominated system of patriarchy to which much of Europe subscribed.

Different scholars' research approaches reveal the ways in which a woman could have some control of her environment. Laura Gowing's *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* shows how women used language to assert influence over the way that society viewed sexuality by monitoring the illicit sex occurring in their community.[31] Gowing later joined Patricia Crawford in compiling a source book of primary documents concerning the attitudes to, and many facets of, women's lives in seventeenth-century England.[32] Their commentary complementing the primary documents within *Women's World in Seventeenth-Century England* shows how the social subordination women faced did not hinder them from expressing themselves as individuals. In a 2001 collection of essays entitled *Women and Religion in Old and New Worlds,* several women's historians explicitly discuss issues of power.[33] Drawing

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[30] Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women*.

[31] Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London.* (New York, 1998).

[32] Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*.

[33] Susan E. Dinan and Debra Meyers, eds. *Women and Religion in Old and New Worlds.* (New York, 2001.)

on a historiography that stresses the idea of female power within several "hidden" spheres, the editors, Susan Dinan and Debra Meyers assert that religion, both Protestant and Catholic, granted women opportunity for independence. Dinan and Meyers argue that despite the early modern European pattern of limiting women's legal rights, religion offered them several opportunities for individualism in the realm of spirituality. Several essays attempt to redefine "power" in ways that benefit this view of the capable early-modern woman. Specifically, Debra Meyer's contribution suggesting that an individual woman's status depended directly upon her family and its religious and cultural ideas illustrates the variety of ways in which women could garner influence and power.[34]

These works implicitly contend that early modern European cultures typically based their identity on a binary system due to the need for predictable behavior of both sexes to ensure social stability. A formula for expected behavior allows, but in no way guarantees, that a society run smoothly, since everyone knows his or her responsibilities and duties. Gender roles helped each person understand his or her place within society based upon his or her biological sex. The psychologist David G. Myers claims that each deviation from a gender role leads to anxiety, so deviations rarely occur. Not only did the binary system help to easily identify allies in the "us" versus "them" dichotomy, it played a critical function in how the different sexes viewed themselves and each other.[35]

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[34] Debra Meyers, "Gender and Religion in England's Catholic Province" in Susan E. Dinan and Debra Meyers, eds. *Women and Religion in Old and New Worlds.* (New York, 2001).

[35] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation* (New Haven, 1992). Colley studied the way in which the British people formed a national identity based upon a similar binary system of "English" versus "French."

A simple binary and oppositional gendered identity proved both psychologically crucial and socially necessary to the functioning of English society.

Studies of the psychology of gender and gender roles state that people exhibit remarkable and unconscious sensitivity to social norms; the disciplines of psychology and sociology state bluntly that gender is a cultural and social construct.[36] The accepted "gender schema theory" proposes that "children learn from their culture a concept of what it means to be male or female and that they adjust their behavior accordingly."[37] It cannot be overstated that a formula for expected behavior allows a society to run smoothly since everyone knows his or her responsibilities and duties.

The theory of gender as a social, not a natural or biological, construct helps to explain how a woman could transgress her prescribed roles into other arenas of activity during a time when the social order was being challenged. To elaborate: if a characteristic is socially constructed and man-made, then it can change as society needs it to change; women can theoretically fill a vacuum. In a time of war, a man cannot be expected to leave the home and fight and yet maintain his household and business activities. This situation not only allows a woman to embrace her husband's role but to possibly undertake more responsibilities, ones that society had labeled as unsuitable for a woman.

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[36] David G. Myers, *Exploring Psychology*, 3rd Edition (New York, 1996), 86, 486. In this case, norms are defined as "understood rules for accepted and expected behavior" and can be used interchangeably with the concept of gender roles.

[37] Myers, Exploring *Psychology*, 86. The *OED* cites work done by A. Comfort, *Sex in Society*, 1963, which states, "The gender role learned by the age of two years is for most individuals almost irreversible, even if it runs counter to the physical sex of the subject."

As mentioned previously, gender is a primary factor in the conception of identity for both individuals and collective entities, especially within the patriarchal society of early modern England. Katrina Honeyman and Jordan Goodman's existing definition of "patriarchy" explains early modern English society well. They described it as a "pervading social system or set of institutional arrangements which accept, reinforce, or structure male hegemony," which is in no way "natural" but a construct, real or imagined, based upon divine and natural law.[38] This philosophical structure historically justified the subjection of women to their husbands and allowed male authority to dominate the social, political, and spiritual order. Frank O'Gorman described the central unit of society as the male-headed and nuclear family; it represented the foundation of social life and order.[39] With the patriarchal system and the importance of the family, women had limited recourse to authority.[40] However, events and circumstances altered individual situations. Scholars have offered opposing viewpoints on how the tumultuous events of the English Civil War affected perceptions of gender and, subsequently, the

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[38] Katrina Honeyman and Jordan Goodman, "Women's Work, Gender Conflict, and Labour Markets in Europe, 1500-1900," *The Economic History Review* 44, No. 4 (Nov. 1991), 609. For another definition, see Julie Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy* (State College, Pa., 1998), x. Hardwick similarly defined patriarchy as "men's monopolization of authority by restricting women's access through various and complex manners," and she claims this ideology strengthened greatly during the early modern period. Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature* (New York, 1983), 131, explained patriarchy as growing steadily during this period due to the Reformation's assertion that God gave men dominion over nature and its equation of women to nature in both their constitutions and their thoughts. She elaborates on the idea of "Mother Nature" as a harmful concept to both women and nature; men viewed their purpose as to be manipulated and exploited. 183-9.

[39] Frank O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History, 1688-1837* (London, 1997), 9.

[40] Although I will argue that pervading patriarchal thoughts concerning the proper actions of women played a large role within the English Civil War, Judith Butler argued against using generalizations of male dominance to explain all of history in *Gender Trouble* (New York, 1999), 46. Butler wrote that "The very notion of "patriarchy" has threatened to become a universalizing concept that overrides or reduces distinct articulations of gender in different cultural contexts."

status of women. Did women's status improve or degenerate as a result of their actions during this period? The fact that many men and women began to philosophize upon the nature of the gender hierarchy and debate justifications for individual rights, as will be shown in later chapters, shows a fracture in the prevailing foundation of masculine ideology. The challenges of the English Civil War blurred the definitions of gender.[41]

Throughout the writings of this period, men and women wove a constant thread on the question of gender and dominance into the identity of the nation and its population, although they rarely acknowledged this undercurrent because the ideas were so ambiguous. Nonetheless, the very words they used, such as shame, dishonor, and humility have feminine connotations, while courage, rationality, and honor carry masculine undertones. These terms pervade the writings of Civil War England. Both sexes wrote extensively about the nature of war and their personal experiences and observations, although men, of course, wrote much of the contemporarily published literature. However, women's words and actions forced a questioning of pre-existing ideas of the natural order of the world. For example, it had previously been assumed that only men experienced the glory and devastation associated with warfare. These assumptions would temporarily halt with the events of the English Civil War,[42] when a few women joined men in the arena of defense, as well as many other public domains.

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[41] See Antonia Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel* (New York, 1984), and Alison Plowden, *Women All on Fire: The Women of the English Civil War* (Gloucester, Eng., 1998) for select examples of women's actions during the English Civil War.

[42] For example, Joseph Swetnam wrote in *The Araignment of Lewde, Idle, Froward and Unconstant Women* (London, 1617) that a main reason for the separation of the sexes involved their response to war. "A man delights in armes and in hearing the rattling drums, but a woman loves to heare sweet musick…a man rejoyceth to march among the murthered carcasses, but a woman to dance on a

Both sexes knew of the trends throughout sixteenth- and seventeenth-century continental Europe of continuous warfare and upheaval, religious bitterness, and centralized royal power, but many writers of the English population viewed this as proof of England's exceptionalism. In 1630, Richard Fanshawe wrote confidently of the superiority of England when compared to the perpetual warfare of the continent.

> Now war is all the world about…
> Only the island which we sow
> (A world without a world) so far
> From present wounds, it cannot show
> An ancient scar.[43]

However, a little more than a decade later, during the first hostilities of 1642-3, his wife Anne Fanshawe described the war as "the perpetual discourse of losing and gaining towns and men; at the windows the sad spectacle of war."[44] After escaping the Siege of Cork in October 1649, she describes her horror at "hearing lamentable shrieks of men, women, and children."[45] The sights of graphic violence affected everyone, and women felt forced to join in the discourse for the war's resolution. Civil War women petitioners lamented that "To see them [our husbands and children] murthered and mangled and cut in pieces before our eyes, to see our Children dashed against the Stones"[46] forced them to monitor and partake in the current events. Although women wrote with "thankfull humility" for all that the men of the nation had done, they stubbornly stated that they

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silken carpet: a man loves to heare the threatenings of his Princes enemies, but a woman weeps when she heares of war: a man tryumphes at warres, but a woman rejoyceth at peace." 38-9

[43] Roger Hudson, ed. *The Grand Quarrel: Women's Memoirs of the English Civil War,* (Gloucestershire, England, 2000), ix.

[44] Ann Fanshawe, *Memoirs* (1829) in Roger Hudson, ed. *The Grand Quarrel: Women's Memoirs of the English Civil War,* (Gloucestershire, England, 2000), 64.

[45] Ibid, 197.

[46] "A True Copie of the Petition of the Gentlewomen, and Tradesmen-wives" (London, 1641), 3.

also had an interest in the cessation of the war. They involved themselves because they felt it "a duty commanded and required."[47]

Men also voiced a sense of bewilderment in the face of the nation's struggles. Both the king and the Parliament forced men to decide for whom they would fight, as both armies vitally needed troops. However, most of the population did not want to participate at all.[48] A lord wrote pleadingly for funds and support that he needed for survival while espousing the noble sentiments of honor, duty, and pride. "Sir, we can die, but not endure to see our Mother England die before us."[49] Lucy Hutchinson, who remained at the side of her husband, Colonel Hutchinson, in many battles, described the "strange ebb and flow of courage and cowardice there was in both parties."[50] The war involved everyone, both male and female, and women were often left to defend their homes, with battles occurring in their back yards. Men deserted constantly due to their need to know of their families and property. In a civil war, a battle might occur at any place and at any time. Few felt safe or secure. This context explains the complementary sentiments expressed by both sexes.

Those most familiar with the current events and politics of seventeenth-century England had predicted a period of unrest for the country before the actual hostilities broke out, despite the prevalent belief in England's exceptionalism. For example, Anne

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[47] Ibid, 2, 6. The women listed as their reasons that "Christ hath purchased us at as deare a rate as he hath done Men", that the church and the state "consisteth the happiness of Women as well as Men," and that "Women are sharers in the common Calamities that accompany both Church and Common-wealth."

[48] Chris Durston, "Phoney War- England, Summer 1642" *History Today* 42, Issue 6 (June 1992), 14.

[49] Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, "A New Remonstrance from the Soldiery" (London, 1648), 3.

[50] Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, (*1806), in Roger Hudson, ed. *The Grand Quarrel: Women's Memoirs of the English Civil War,* (Gloucestershire, England, 2000), 119.

Fanshawe, whose husband served as a close confidante to King Charles, recognized an urgent need "to avoid the fury of this madness of the people."[51] Brilliana Harley, wife of Sir Robert Harley, wrote in 1638 and foresaw a possible confrontation after seeing the difficulties her husband endured as a Puritan who spoke within the halls of Parliament. She wrote to her son:

> Greate trubells and wars must be, both to purg his church of ipocrits, and that his eminies at the bist may be utterly destroyed…and, my deare Ned, tho I fermely believe there will be great trubells, yet I looke with ioy beyond those days of trubell,…and happy are they that shall live to see it, which I hope you will doo.[52]
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Men also expressed dismay at the approaching gloom of war. Thomas Knyvett MP wrote to his wife from London, "Tis to be feared this threatening storm will not be allayed without some showers of blood."[53]

The similarities between the writings on both sides of the sword describing the context of the war are remarkable. Much of the population expressed powerlessness tempered with a feeling of governmental neglect in their writings, whether directed toward the king or the Parliament. These writings can be interpreted as signs of the confusion overwhelming the country as to the proper role for individuals, which included the actions of the leaders. Mary Overton, a Leveller, attacked the Parliament in 1643 "for these …abuses of the people," complaining of the members that "You can find

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[51] Anne Fanshawe, *Memoirs*, 27.

[52] Brilliana Harley, *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley, wife of Sir Robert Harley, of Brampton Bryan, Knight of Bath* (London, 1854), 10. Lady Anne D'Ewes echoed these sentiments in a letter to her husband, Sir Simonds D'Ewes, also a Member of Parliament, in 1640. She wrote, "I chiefly want your company for the best things but I hope and pray that after a few months we may meet again with comfort and that in the meantime God may enable you to discharge your place in Parliament to his glory and the public good." In Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 249.

[53] From in Chris Durston, "Phoney War," 14.

leisure…but you are so busied with the great affaires of the Kingdome (as you call it).”[54] A soldier of the Parliamentary army subtitled his petition of 1648: "For a just and righteous Government, to be established within this Nation, abhorring and deceiting against all Anarchy, Confusion, and leveling of mens Estates."[55] He promises to ensure "that our enemie must not be our rulers, we professing, that good men, rather than good laws must save us."[56] The Royalist army espoused parallel views and anxieties. A Royalist petitioner echoes this imagery when stating that the "Monarch hath bin crucified…between two Theeves, the Pope and the People."[57] The allegiances of these individuals did not matter in their attitudes towards the turmoil of a civil war.

John Cleveland, a prolific writer before and during the English Civil War, saw the main threat to England as arising from the popular attempt to level social status. The pamphlets of the decades surrounding the English Civil War created a provocative environment of ideas, which could either challenge or defend the traditional power structure of this period. These writings flooded the population. The pamphlets remained an easily attainable source of information for those able to read and understand the abstract issues of political legitimacy and power. Unfortunately, most political writers possessed a very prominent agenda that tainted their writing into propaganda, and this doubt concerning the accuracy of information further lent to the sense of disorder disrupting the sense of unity in the country. Cleveland, a political and intellectual

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[54] Mary Overton, “The humble Appeale and Petition of Mary Overton, Prisoner in Bridewell” (London, 1643), 9.
[55] Warwick, "A New Remonstrance from the Souldiery,” 1.
[56] Ibid, 3.
[57] Sir Robert Filmer, "The Anarchy of a Limited Monarchy" (1648), 2.

Royalist, stated, "He [the diurnal-maker] defames a good Title, as much as most of our modern Noble-men."[58] The struggle between conservative tradition and progressive change concerning political and religious authority seemed to many contemporary observers as the primary point of contention for which the nation engaged itself in war.[59] Disagreement about whether to reinforce tradition, adapt it to contemporary needs, or overthrow custom altogether divided the nation. Everyone desired a return to peace, but everyone remained resolute that the peace returned on their own terms.

Violent passions swept the nation and led to the loss of many lives. Dread pervaded the nation at the prospect of wasted lives and danger to family and homes. As mentioned, with a civil war, many wrote of the palpable terror they felt at the possibility that either army would appear in their backyards.[60] However, not all of the population felt that the outcome of a war would change the path of the nation. The author of one pamphlet of 1648 espoused the opinion that the war held no import, since the outcome would not affect the people because they would still remain under an arbitrary power. He states that "The only point is, who shall have that Arbitrary power, whether one man or many."[61] This important question found no answers amongst the popular culture and thought of England.

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[58] John Cleveland, "A Character of a Diurnal-Maker" (London, 1654), A2. John Cleveland used satire to criticize society. "Character" is a one such satire that attacks newspapers for being biased and inaccurate.

[59] Bulstrode Whitelocke expressed the belief that his countrymen had "slid into this beginning of civil war by one unexpected accident after another as waves of the sea." From Durston, "Phoney War," 14.

[60] Margaret Eure wrote, "For my part, if I hear but a door creak I take it to be a drum and am reddy to run out." From Durston, "Phoney War," 16.

[61] Filmer, "Anarchy.", 3.

English culture traditionally looked to a mixture of Christianity and cosmology to make sense of the world. In the hierarchical society of early modern England, only the elite had the opportunity to receive the education and current information needed to form a suitable response to the social upheaval. Therefore, magic, astrology, prophecy, and destiny all played a large role in the population's understanding of the causation of events. The vast majority of the English population lived within a well-defined locality containing its own customs, institutions, and boundaries for living life. Although many of these customs were shared, English historian Frank O'Gorman analyzed the impact of this isolation: "Their political institutions, their social systems, their economies, and, most importantly, their reformed religious establishments continued largely independently."[62] As an example of this provincial identity and the variety of understandings available to contemporary society, Lady Dorothy Pakington viewed the origins and the continuation of the contemporary troubles as God's wrath upon England for challenging the divine authority of the king. She wrote a prayer after the king's execution,

> Lord we are a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, that have added drunkenness unto thirst, one extremity and contrariety of sin unto another, and at last advanced to that highest pitch that any Christian nation hath at any time been known to be guilty of.[63]

In this complex and turbulent environment, several women acted in ways that directly contradicted the prescribed roles for women. Chapter II analyzes the ambivalence that writers and social authorities had concerning the ideas of proper

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[62] O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century*, 1.

[63] Lady Dorothy Pakington, "Let Not the Sun Go Down upon this Monarchy," 1649, from Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 63.

behavior for women and exposes the major contradictions and ambiguities of the construct of “femininity” in pre-war England. The following two chapters describe the activities of women during the English Civil War who managed to maintain their femininity yet enter the “masculine” domains of education, writing, defense, religion, and politics. The conclusion analyzes the effects of these transgressions between "masculine" and "feminine" roles and the subsequent reactions directed towards women. The women who participated in the English Civil War developed an identity that understood the cultural limitations placed upon them yet understood themselves as having more to offer than just passivity and submissiveness. Before the war, any possible challenge to the social order caused great anxiety. The challenges to the gender order proved to be legitimate and real during the war. After the war authorities placed stronger restrictions upon those that they viewed as the culprits of the confusion: women.

CHAPTER II

THE AMBIGUITIES OF PRESCRIBED GENDER ROLES

Since humanity creates the concept of gender, and humanity never remains static in its actions or beliefs, gender is fluid by its nature and can change to fit circumstances and specific needs. No universal and consistent ideal of femininity or masculinity existed in seventeenth-century England. Comparing various works with each other and then with actual behavior illustrates that the simple classification of women as a predictable and subservient group in the English Civil War is futile. This chapter will show the prevalent tension that the nation felt concerning the maintenance of the gender hierarchy and the inconsistent views of writers as to how to do so. Analyzing the vast array of advice that men wrote for women shows this. These works often provide contradictory advice and philosophies about the manifestation of femininity for the proper woman. These ambiguities concerning the proper expectations and behaviors for women help explain the fear and confusion that transgressive women caused within the English Civil War. In the context of the many debates centered on the nature and capacity of woman during the pre-civil war era, the women of the English Civil War seized the opportunity to exploit blurred boundaries and behave in ways that either intentionally or unintentionally challenged society's assumptions about their role in the world.

Many voices in the perennial debate on women before the civil war praised the fairer sex. Thomas Tusser, for example, extolled the invaluable contributions a woman

made to society and a wife made to a husband in his much-utilized manual of husbandry, *The Points of Housewifery*. He wrote,

> Take weapon away, of what force is a man?
> Take housewife from husband, and what is he then?[64]

Tusser's work had been published nineteen times from 1557 to 1638 and only religious writings received more publication than *The Points of Housewifery*. Many people would have been familiar with its practical contents.

In the philosophical genre, Jacques Du Bosc wrote a very controversial text that also praised women. He criticized those who defamed women's nature solely based on their biological classification and wrote, "Those who imagine that the piety of women is but a tenderness of complexion or a weakness of spirit are not of our opinion."[65] Women also joined in this theoretical dialogue and sought to defend themselves against sexist justifications for their subordinate position in a gender hierarchy. Ester Sowernam, for example, used her knowledge of the Bible to claim that male writers often used "collections wrested out of Scripture, to dishonor and abuse women."[66]

Debates between publications on the nature of gender seem to have been very popular during the early seventeenth century. Historian Elspeth Graham notes that these

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[64] Thomas Tusser, *The Points of Housewifery, United to the Comfort of Husbandry* (London, 1580) in Joan Larsen Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, ed., *Daughters, Wives, and Widows: Writings by Men about Women and Marriage in England, 1540-1600* (Chicago, 1992), 211.

[65] Jacques Du Bosc, *The Complete Woman* (1632), trans. N.N. (London: 1654) in Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, 268. Du Bosc was never translated from French into English again after the outbreak of the war, but his secular rationale for more equality for women resonates with the English documents discussing the use of reason for organizing social institutions.

[66] Ester Sowernam, *Ester hath hang'd Haman: or An Answer to a Lewd Pamphlet* (London, 1617), 4. Ester Sowernam was a pseudonym used for its obvious contrast to Joseph Swetnam. It could have been either a woman or a man, but, of the many works published in response to Swetnam, Sowernam remains the most pertinent to this thesis as it directly rebukes each of Swetnam's arguments. Joseph Swetnam, *The Araignment of Lewde, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Woman* (London, 1617).

discourses between the sexes "offer insight into the concerns and fashionable interests of urban, educated, middle-class women and men in the early seventeenth-century."[67] Alongside the popular dialogue of the 1610s between Joseph Swetnam and Ester Sowernam upon the nature of women, the anonymously published comic dialogue of "Hic Mulier" and "Haec Vir" continued the battle of the sexes into the 1620s. "Hic Mulier" is a diatribe against women who betray their sex through assertive and immodest behavior. "Haec Vir" defends these women's rights to personal liberty and demands the recognition of them as individuals. Published as companion pieces, these entertaining works open with confusion over which speaker represents the man. Hic Mulier (womanish-man) accuses Haec Vir (man-woman) of "baseness, unnaturalness, shamefulness, and foolishness."[68] Haec Vir then proceeds logically to prove this assumption wrong over the rest of the pages. These contemporary works establish the ambivalent and anxious environment in which seventeenth-century women lived prior to the English Civil War. Many works, such as Swetnam's *The Araignment* and "Hic Mulier," commonly utilized women as the subject of their jokes in an important contemporary sub-genre that reveals in a very complicated manner the uncertainty that men felt towards women.

However, any complimentary arguments about women's worth stand in direct contrast to other works that discuss the inferiority of women as part of the inherent

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[67] Elspeth Graham, "Ester Sowernam," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: In Association with British Academy: From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000* (hereafter *DNB),* ed. HCG Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford, 2004), 734.

[68] "Hic Mulier, or, The Man-Woman; and Haec Vir, or the Womanish-Man," (1620; repr. ed., Exeter, 1973), A3.

nature of patriarchal government. In the justification for this type of human society, many writers drew strongly from historical writings of earlier times to show that women were subordinate by God's design. Topics ranged from whether a woman should receive an education to her capacity to exercise authority. All of these questions remained strongly tied to the perpetual debate on the nature of a woman. Was she inherently sinful and irrational? Even when writers encouraged women to receive an education, they strongly warned women of the danger in forgetting their proper role within society. For example, the practical legal handbook, *The Law's Resolution of Women's Rights*, published anonymously in 1597/8, includes many statements such as "A wife how gallant soever she be, glistereth but in the riches of her husband, as the moon hath no light but it is the sun's."[69] Most of these works take a woman's subordinate status for granted.

Other works extolled even harsher restrictions on the activities and ultimate purpose of a woman. Juan Luis Vives, an influential humanist moralist wrote that "Nature sheweth that the male's duty is to succor and defend, and the female to follow and to wait upon the male…and obey him, that she may live the better."[70] Vives intended his work to act as a guide for proper instruction, and, according to the modern commentary of Klein, his *A Very Fruitful and Pleasant Book Called the Instruction of a Christian Woman* was the first and most influential treatise on women's education.[71]

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[69] *Law's Resolution of Women's Rights* (London, 1632), in Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows, Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, 47.

[70] Juan Luis Vives, *A Very Fruitful and Pleasant Book Called the Instruction of a Christian Woman*, trans. Richard Hyrde (1523, repr. ed., London, 1529) in Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, 114.

[71] Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, 98.

Underlying this form of patriarchal and misogynist thinking was a ubiquitous fear of disorder that might erupt by upsetting the gender hierarchy. This fear pervaded all of early modern Europe, and the concern for order demanded the quelling of any form of public dissent from the status quo. Gender as a way to order society creates individual and collective identities and helps individuals to grasp society's expectations of them. Several writers mention the contemporary idea that women could dominate men through their sexuality if allowed to do so, and female sexuality could potentially destroy the male. Joseph Swetnam clarified this fear of women's subversive power over man by saying that a woman "can worke a man like wax" to get whatever she desires.[72]

As the rulers of the nation strongly identified themselves as masculine, the destruction of the male by the female conjured dangerous consequences for traditional authority.[73] As female power in sex, or any aspect of life, could be interpreted as an inversion of order, a common method of demeaning a man and his wife included accusing the wife of sexual promiscuity and adultery. The source of much of the misogyny revolved around ideas of female sexuality and insatiability. The use of this belief in a woman's innate lustiness to justify the need for masculine control of women has a very serious problem. Women could not control the manner in which men

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[72] Joseph Swetnam, *The Araignment of Lewde, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Woman* (London, 1617), 12. Notably, Swetnam's writings earned him the title of "Swetnam- the woman-hater" and made him a comic figure. See also James Strong, "Joanereidos: or Feminine Valour Eminently Discovered in Western Women", (1645, repr. ed. 1674) who also expressed this fear of women's power through sexuality, saying that "Venus is uppermost and Mars on's back": 7.

[73] Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics during the English Civil War* (New York, 2005), 15. See also Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 138, in which the authors explain the misconceptions of female sexuality by contemporaries, "The context within which female sexuality was understood was shaped by a range of legal, medical, and customary ideas and expectations." The only positive note that they could find in these perceptions involved the belief that a female orgasm was necessary for conception, so men had to learn to please their wives.

perceived their sexual availability, but women bore the blame for causing men to entertain lascivious thoughts. There was no way for an innocent woman to prohibit the way a man perceived her, yet she held responsibility for maintaining her reputation and virtue in his eyes. This conundrum relates to the social concern of female promiscuity. Wanton women definitely threatened the stability of the family and disordered society's understanding of the marital relationship, with the wife as a dependent extension of the husband.

Beauty represented another way in which women could theoretically achieve control over men. Swetnam warned his readers not to be manipulated: "Although women are beautifull, [and] shew pitty, yet their heartes are blacke, swelling with mischief."[74] He stated the recurrently popular belief that appearance contradicts the truth of the soul. A pretty face equals a cruel heart, heavenly looks mean hellish thoughts, and a modest countenance hides a merciless mind. Furthermore, beauty holds danger: "faces are lures, their beauties are baytes, their lookes are netts, and the words charmes, and all to bring men to ruine."[75] Ideas of a woman's sole access to power through beauty and sex supported the idea that women of the early modern period demonstrated uncontrollable emotions and passions and inconsistent behaviors, which placed women in opposition to the ideal of masculinity. However, Ester Sowernam responded to Swetnam's writing by pointing out that while he "pretended to write

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[74] Swetnam, *The Araignment*, 31. He proceeds to label women as proud, lazy, and idle to the hindrance of their husbands.

[75] Ibid, 4. Swetnam concluded his work on the evils of women with a justification for not attacking the male gender. "Nor would I not have women murmur against me for I have not written more bitterly against men, for it is a very hard winter when one Wolfe eateth another…and a most unkinde part of it were for one man to speake ill of another." 64. This example further illustrates the primary role that gender played in identity construction.

against lewd, idle, and unconstant women, hee doth most impudently rage and rayle generally against the whole sexe of women."[76] According to her, he lied throughout his whole work and even in his title.

During the civil war, Royalists identified themselves strongly with the authority of a gendered and masculine hierarchy. After all, they backed the ultimate patriarch, the king. However, a problem emerged when the king demanded submission of the men of Parliament. Parliament, too, saw itself as masculine and felt threatened by such a dominating maneuver. This resulted in a violent debate upon the nature of legitimate authority, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. Historian Jerome Nadelhaft described how this situation affected the nation: "Although the controversies first involved church and state, they soon of necessity took in monarchs and their subjects, and then all supposed superiors and inferiors, rich and poor, masters and servants, men and women, husbands and wives."[77]

Diane Purkiss argues in her work, *Literature, Gender, and Politics during the English Civil War,* that competing ideas of appropriate masculine models worked clumsily during the English Civil War when they faced each other so dramatically in the forms of the Royalist and Parliamentary armies.[78] The identity and authority of both sides was in question. In this psychologically challenging situation, the shock of bloodshed and death during the Civil War greatly affected the attitude of the nation and

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[76] Sowernam, *Ester hath hang'd Haman,* A2.

[77] Jerome Nadelhaft, "'The Englishwoman's Sexual Civil War': Feminist Attitudes Towards Men, Women, and Marriage 1650-1740", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 43, No. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1982), 558.

[78] Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, 2. She adds, "It was in part the unacknowledged tension between them that added emotional and psychic impetus to what might appear superficially to be rational political choices."

forced an evaluation of its beliefs. Societies have always perceived battle as the arena in which warriors proved their masculinity. However, instead of quelling the doubts of gender, the English Civil War actually created much more anxiety about the concept of masculinity and the right to govern. Purkiss suggests that a "nation in crisis is the moment when defensive functions are overwhelming."[79] These anxieties manifested themselves in the form of attacks on what was most obviously not masculine, women. A poem by Royalist John Dale, "The Muses Heretofore" spoke of the ritualization of conflict within England and the role that women played. The behavior of women, whether Royalist or Puritan, would determine the future of the country.[80] For example, Dale wrote of Queen Henrietta Maria,

> Your maids of honour with their glorious fight
> Millions of Preaching Citty dames will fright.[81]

However, the mere ambiguity and fluid nature of gender during the English Civil War allowed women to exploit the uncertain matters of the masculinity/femininity construct.

Although gender and its place within the social order constituted a major aspect of English identity, it both could and could not be controlled by social authorities. These authorities encouraged a number of behavioral roles for both men and women to uphold the gender hierarchy. A hierarchy can only exist if there is a definite separation of those

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[79] Ibid, 28. One example of irrational behavior she explains includes the common practice of capturing an officer of the opposition and then personally ransoming him.

[80] John Dale, "The Muses Heretofore" of late 1630s, cited in Jerome de Groot, "Mothers, Lovers, and Others: Royalist Women" in James Daybell, ed., *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700* (Hampshire, England, 2004), 203. Dale labeled Puritan women as "ugly old wenches ignorant of all." De Groot also uses Henry Birkhead's poem "Till with Your Self," of the 1640s, which focused upon the strain that war placed upon identity. Birkhead described Parliamentarian women as disruptive and transgressive but the Queen as symbolic of the state and normality, 202.

[81] Dale in de Groot, "Mothers, Lovers, and Others," 203.

participating in it into different expectations and duties based upon obvious distinctions.[82] Visual and perceivable disparities, such as clothing for a biological sex, seem to provide an easy manner to identify a collective group, much like skin color. The prescription of acceptable behavior and beliefs reinforced the social order and the preservation of male domination. "Hic Mulier" also expressed the need and justification for a differentiation between the sexes: "It is necessary, that there be a distinct and special difference betweene Man and Woman, both in their habits and behaviors" based upon "the Lawes of Nature, the Rules of Religion, and the Customs of all civill Nations." [83] This differentiation led to a rationalization for the gender hierarchy.

Challenges to the patriarchal order probably originated within the private domestic sphere. There, a man supposedly exercised supreme authority as king of the household. However, he needed his wife's help to maintain a functioning home. William Perkins, a popular and well-respected Puritan preacher and prolific writer in the early seventeenth century, explained the need for distinctions between the sexes of the family in his understanding of the rhetoric that the family was a microcosm of the state. He wrote,

> Upon this condition of the family, being the seminary of all other societies, it followeth that the holy and righteous government thereof is a direct means for the good ordering both of church and Protectorate.[84]

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[82] Swetnam attempted to justify this hierarchy with the erroneous statement "Men I say may live without women, but women cannot live without men," *The Araignment*, 14. Therefore, men must be better and deserve to be at the top of the hierarchy. However, Sowernam replied, "God created the woman his last worke, as to supply and make absolute that imperfect building which was unperfected in man" implying that perhaps women were the better sex, *Ester hath hang'd Haman*, B3.

[83] "Hic Mulier", C2.

[84] William Perkins, *Christian Economy: or a Short Survey of the Right Manner of Erecting and Ordering a Family According to the Scriptures*, trans. Thomas Pickering (London, 1580) in Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, 155. This work went through three editions in England by 1635.

However, this prescription for the ordering of society differed greatly from the situations that women found themselves in when not in the public sphere. Contemporary female scholar, Bathsua Pell Makin articulated her understanding of the need for a hierarchy later in the century, after witnessing the events of the war, by explaining that the threat of raising women's status "is to deface the Image of God in Man, it will make Women so high, and men so low, like Fire in the House-top, it will set the whole world in a Flame."[85] This powerful analogy of the drastic consequences from an inversion of gender order portrays the real anxiety that men may have felt concerning their own individual status and identity.

Society looked to men to uphold the social order by maintaining the household, or the microcosm of the greater world. "Hic Mulier" specifically blamed men for the apparent increase in women's inappropriate public behavior in the seventeenth century. The author condemned "Fathers, Husbands, or Sustainers of these new Hermophridites" for not keeping women in their subordinate place as their masculine duty dictated.[86] Vives clarifies this facet of the patriarchal ideology well. He explains that a man has a duty to rule the house: the wife can only rule and govern maidens, handle the kitchen, and minor matters of the household economy with her husband's permission. Swetnam extolled the work that occupied men, to "watch and ward, fight and defend, till the

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Interestingly, Phyllis Mack states that Quakers believed that all hierarchies resulted from human sinfulness of the fall in the Garden of Eden, and they did not need to be followed because Jesus had amended the sin. The only restriction upon women included their public speaking, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth Century England* (Berkeley, Ca., 1992), 140.

[85] Bathsua Pell Makin, "An Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen" (London, 1647), 3.

[86] "Hic Mulier," C3.

ground, labour in the vineyard," while warning that a "woman will spend all the gaines."[87] However, he also warns of the danger of not satisfying a wife: if not provided with basic necessities, she will go elsewhere and become unchaste.[88] A man must not allow his wife to commit adultery or society would suffer. In the popular analogy of the household as a microcosm of the state, adultery equals treason.

The same role of controlling women fell to the male child once he reached maturity. Purkiss declares that mothers knew to "sacrifice" their sons and the maternal relationship in order for the boy to develop masculine virtue and learn to rule his own home and serve society.[89] Since the future of society fell upon the youth, Sowernam specifically targeted them for her advice. "You my worthy youths are the hope of Man-hoode," she wrote, "the principal point of Man-hoode is to defend, and what more…man-like defence than to defend the just reputation of a woman."[90]

However, the prescribed philosophy of dominance simply did not prove practical in managing a family, and men rarely followed the practice of totally subjugating their wives. Contemporary Puritan preacher William Perkins taught that one of a husband's duties to his wife and himself involved "suffering himself sometimes to be admonished or advised by her." If the couple had similar beliefs and goals, as in a companionable marriage, they would understand each other and work together for the

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[87] Swetnam, *The Araignment,* 15. This represents the exact opposite household relationship that Thomas Tusser described.

[88] Ibid, 53-4.

[89] Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, 24-5. Purkiss describes the male transition into adulthood as the destruction of female influence. She explains the maturation of boys as the traumatic separation from the mother in favor of negotiations with the father, which, Purkiss argues, ultimately leads to the masculine disgust with women that she calls the "cult of violent masculinity."

[90] Sowernam, *Ester hath hang'd Haman*, A4.

benefit of each other.[91] Philosopher Du Bosc also believed that this simple and rational personal relationship would lead the husband to treat the wife well. He wrote that "Though the husband may be the wife's head, yet it seemeth he hath no power nor liberty granted him in this regard." This theoretical limitation of a husband's rights extended to any physical mistreatment that the husband might bestow. If a couple was of the same flesh (as symbolically united through the religious marriage ceremony), Du Bosc believed that "No man will hate, much less beat, his own flesh, but nourish and cherish it."[92] A wartime example of this possibility of mutual encouragement for the prosperity of a marriage is illustrated by Anne Conway's husband, Edward, Viscount Conway, praised her for possessing the best of both sexes: a man's intellect and a woman's beauty.[93] A man owed his family several duties, such as instruction in Christianity, protection and defense, and enhancement of its welfare. These demanding duties, along with public roles, required a complex relationship between husband and wife.

The spread of ideas through literature explains the prevalence of this belief in the fact of a male hierarchy that had pervaded Western society for centuries.[94] The rise of print culture and the increase in literacy in the early modern period made these concepts

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[91] Perkins, *Christian Economy* in Klein, ed. *Daughters, Wives, and Widows, 170*-2. See Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, Ma., 1983.) Ozment also expressed this pragmatic justification for the husband holding responsibility for the family. He stated that men remained under moral and legal pressures to be good to their wife and family, but he could not elaborate upon these supposed safeguards against a man's behavior.

[92] Du Bosc, *The Complete Woman,* in Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, 172.

[93] Anne Conway, *Conway Letters: the Correspondence of Anne, viscountess Conway, Henry More, and their Friends, 1642-1684,* ed. Marjorie Hope Nicholson (New Haven, Ct., 1930), 16.

[94] Frank O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century* explains, "Contemporary writers were in no doubt where final authority in the family lay, but they insisted that wives should be treated with honour and consideration; they should be neither belittled nor humiliated," 10.

more accessible to the public while making deviations more obvious. Crawford and Gowing estimate that the literacy rates of the sixteenth century were 10% for women and 50% for men but increased greatly and steadily through the period of the English Civil War.[95] Peter Earle estimated that by 1680, 36% of women could read.[96] The increasing literacy rate explains the increasing importance that the written word would have held upon the reader concerning the range of topics of conversation and debate. Among select circles, the ideas contained in written works, published and unpublished, were circulated and certainly discussed among the educated population. Recently, Joy Wiltenburg argued that popular writings, such as pamphlets, might not represent reality, but they "solidify social image… [and] sexual politics."[97] However, as discussed in the next chapters, the need for male superiority that was described in these writings as necessary for social order was challenged in the English Civil War.

Contemporary male writers included many explicit and implicit justifications for the need for social order, and social order began at home with a male head of the household. Specifically, the writers of advice literature attempted to support this hierarchy by influencing the way in which men publicly viewed women, and, more importantly, they taught women how to view themselves. Joan Larsen Klein discussed the power that this genre of literature had in maintaining the perceptions of gender:

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[95] Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 6. These rates rose steadily throughout the seventeenth century as educational opportunities became more readily available to a larger proportion of the population.

[96] Peter Earle, "The Female Labour Market in London in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries," *The Economic History Review* 42, No. 3 (Aug. 1989) estimates that by 1690, it reached 48%: 335.

[97] Joy Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville, Va., 1992), *5*.

"When men's views of women's place were embodied in sermon literature or courtesy books, those views were usually hortatory and prescriptive, often reflecting negatively their authors' perceptions of the daily lives of women."[98] Instructional writers intended most advice and conduct books for young and impressionable readers.

The genres of popular, and well-known, literature included many types of publications, from almanacs to religious works. These works, although they often contradict each other, established the gender boundaries of English society that would blur in the Civil War. Juan Luis Vives wrote a philosophical instruction book on how to educate girls and view women. His humanist and Christian background contributed to his obvious thoughts upon the inferiority of women. *A Very Fruitful and Pleasant Book Called the Instruction of a Christian Woman* enjoyed great popularity throughout Europe and went through nine editions in England once translated in 1555.[99] As mentioned previously, Thomas Tusser wrote *The Points of Housewifery, United to the Comfort of Husbandry* in 1580 as a practical and detailed almanac of advice dealing with the management of a household. He included exact instructions on the duties of a housewife in verse form for easy memorization. This book has remained in continuous print since 1580 and had gone through nineteen editions by 1638. Its contents and ideas were certainly very familiar to the target audience. Richard Brathwait published a conduct

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[98] Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, x.

[99] Juan Luis Vives, *A Very Fruitful and Pleasant Book Called the Instruction of a Christian Woman,* (1529), trans. Thomas Paynell (London: 1555) in Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*. This companion work for men, *The Office and Duty of an Husband*, was never printed in England due to its political implications. Vives endorsed Catherine of Aragon as an admirable woman and opposed Henry VIII's divorce. See also Montserrat Piera, "Juan Luis Vives" *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 318: Sixteenth-Century Spanish Writers* in Gale Literary Database Online (2005). Piera states that Oxford University asked Vives to teach in England with educational and moral reforms due to his international influence upon educational ideas.

manual titled *The English Gentlewomen* in 1631 as a companion to his work on gentlemen. This work also provided advice to women, but of a different sort than Tusser intended. Brathwait wrote for aristocratic women on the proper way to behave in elite society.[100]

Each of these works from very different genres described proper feminine behavior followed the custom of beginning with a justification for the subordination of women based on Eve's fall in the Garden of Eden. In 1615, Joseph Swetnam repeated the argument of the times that the evils of women's nature stemmed from Eve's sin, noting that

> By her aspiring minde and wanton will she quickly procured mans fall, and therefore ever since they [women] are and have been a woe unto man, and follow the line of their first leader.[101]

This simple explanation for the need to control women not only explained female suffering in reproduction but also their place as the subordinate element in the gender hierarchy. However, Ester Sowernam countered this biblical justification by arguing that the trials that men see as punishment for women's sins actually constitute the greatest gifts of life. In answer to Swetnam's assertion that "Amongst all the creatures that God hath created, there is none more subject to misery than a woman,"[102] Sowernam answered that "All the punishments inflicted upon women, are encountered with most

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[100] Frederick Waage, "Richard Brathwait," *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 151: British Prose Writers of the Early Seventeenth Century* in Gale Literary Database Online (1995). Waage describes Brathwait's works as "substantial courtesy books." Brathwait acted as a vocal Royalist throughout and after the war and endured constant harassment from the Parliament.

[101] Swetnam, *The Araignment,* 1.

[102] Ibid, 57.

gratious blessings and benefits."[103] These pre-war writings resounded later in the century when women began to argue vehemently against the use of ancient Genesis to justify the contemporary gender hierarchy.[104] Women writers claimed that men twisted scripture, which many viewed as the ultimate authority, to justify their patriarchal views, as church fathers had done for centuries.[105]

However, several works preceding the civil war period recognized the irrationality of assuming that women were, by nature alone, inferior or distinctly different. These literary discourses contributed to the popular uncertainty of prescribed gender roles. Although the actions in which women participated clearly contradict this assumption, the understanding of a gender hierarchy had a historic and formidable past. When forced to reconcile the duties and capabilities that women demonstrated in everyday activities with the philosophical justifications for female subordination, writers seem to waver in their condemnation of the fair sex. Jacques Du Bosc, a male proto-feminist, proved in his views of women to be the most controversial and disruptive to conventional ideas. *The Complete Woman* proclaims that no fundamental difference exists between the sexes and includes very favorable descriptions of women. It claims that men err greatly when they assume that woman is weak and unstable and that she benefits from a patriarchal society. The translated work only received one printing in

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[103] Sowernam, *Ester hath hang'd Haman*, 9.

[104] Katherine Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent in Seventeenth-Century England: English Women Writers and the Public Sphere (*Cambridge, England, 2004), 144. Gillespie analyzes Elizabeth's Poole's assertion of the misunderstanding of Eve's ability to explain her current "curse of subordination" to show that not all women agreed with the justification for their subservient position within society.

[105] Merry Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, England, 2000), 17. Wiesner states that church fathers wrote harshly of women to combat their personal sexual urges and restrict female independence.

England, either due to the chaos of the war or because of its implications for gender equality.

Brathwait too called for a shift in the popular perception of woman. Klein states that, "[Brathwait] liberates her from many of the social (and perhaps even religious) restrictions [that] moralists like Vives and Perkins would impose upon her."[106] Brathwait primarily stresses a woman's proper appearance and her comfort with herself as a woman within society, rather than abiding by the impossible restrictions upon women, such as remaining silent and submissive. Nevertheless, he still maintains a fundamental and biological difference between the genders although he attempts to encourage the development of less visibly subversive qualities of women. He states, "You may find women, though weak in sex and condition, yet parallels to men for charity, chastity, piety, purity, and virtuous conversation."[107] In this view, if women and men seemed too similar, it would upset the gender hierarchy upon which society functioned but obviously not to the extent that authorities silenced the idea.

Yet Brathwait's relatively favorable treatment of women came nowhere close to balancing the number of more hostile views preached elsewhere. For example, Vives bases his work upon the primary themes that women exhibit weakness in body and mind and total inferiority to men; women could possibly represent a threat to themselves and society if they ever forget their place. In a misogynist explanation of what he sees as women's "timorous" nature, he claims that a woman "fear[s] and abhor[s] herself" and is

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[106] Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, 235.
[107] Richard Brathwait, *The English Gentlewoman* (London: 1631) in Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, ed., 241.

constantly "vexed with the scourge of her own conscience." Her anxious and unstable behavior results from a constant fear of having her lewd and unthrifty nature exposed.[108] In Vives' scheme, a woman exists to be a wife, and a wife merely represents an extension of the husband, inferior and subject to him always. Left to her own devices, a woman could destroy herself and all those around her.

A woman's subjection to her husband remains a constant premise throughout much of the literature. As mentioned before, Eve's fall in Genesis was the universal justification for this ideological position. A more precise explanation states that

> Eve because she had helped to seduce her husband hath inflicted on her an especial bane…*In sorrow shalt thou bring forth thy children, thy desires shall be subject to thy husband, and he shall rule over her*.[109]

Therefore, when women threatened this conception of the world and its order by acting in an unorthodox manner, such as preaching publicly, writing petitions, and voicing dissent, their behavior challenged masculine authority. Men commonly made jokes and demeaned female activities in written records to ease any resulting anxiety.[110]

Social leaders deliberately and constantly laid out the expectations of men and women and the duties they must from a very young age submit to in life. Both men and women understood these expectations, which directly corresponded to a woman's duties regarding her husband and family. Brathwait specifically advised women, "Conform yourselves likewise to a nuptial state…Contest not with your head [husband] for

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[108] Juan Luis Vives, *A Very Fruitful and Pleasant Book Called the Instruction of a Christian Woman*, trans. Richard Hyrde (1523, repr. London, 1529) in Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, 106.

[109] *Laws*, 32

[110] Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, 62; See also Christopher Orchard, "The Rhetoric of Corporeality and the Political Subject: Containing the Dissenting Female Body in Civil War England" in Susan Shifrin, ed. *Women as Sites of Culture: Women's Roles in Cultural Formation from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century* (Burlington, VT, 2002).

preeminence…Honor him then as he cherisheth the love he conceives in you."[111] Women grasped this role well, as evidenced by their personal writings. Although they may have had both practical and philosophical difficulties with their inferior status, most did not publicly challenge their lot, as they had received socialization throughout life that they existed to satisfy their husbands and raise productive children. Although many women internalized this belief of individual purpose, economics and survival also provided a strong motive for a woman to yield to the social demands of marriage.

Yet, not all women accepted this rationale, and several examples exist of women challenging their subordinate status even before the Civil War. Ester Sowernam, who, as mentioned previously, wrote in defense of women to Joseph Swetnam, called his attacks on women's nature "scandalous and blasphemous." Sowernam asserted her right to speak for women by describing herself as "neither Maide, Wife, nor Widdowe, yet really all, and therefore experienced to defend all."[112] Her description of herself fits into none of the established categories for early modern women. Since a woman's marital position was the most important factor for determining her place within society, it is significant that Sowernam defines herself with none of these roles. To clarify the importance of this strategy in making her arguments against the gender hierarchy, it is important to discuss the impact of marriage upon a woman's life. For example, historians Judith Bennett and Amy Froide's work on singlewomen contends that since

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[111] Brathwait, *The English Gentlewoman*, 245. See also Nadelhaft, "The Englishwoman's Sexual Civil War," 555. Nadelhaft writes of the prevalence of this understanding of the hierarchy, "Not surprisingly, the stereotype originated with and was perpetuated by men, who monopolized institutions of power and education and the means of communication."

[112] Sowernam, *Ester hath hang'd Haman*, A2.

marriage represented normative behavior, a woman's status totally depended upon her marital status. Although when a woman married, she lost legal, economic, and social independence, she gained privileges within the family and the community.[113] A woman's decision whether to marry and to whom, although a limited choice, possibly signified the most power a woman could exert over her life. However, if she exercised that power by choosing not to marry at all, she would always remain suspect in society.

Once married, a woman theoretically embraced a very different set of duties along with a different identity and status. Puritan William Perkins stressed that the two most important purposes of life for wives were the submission and unquestioning obedience to their husbands. He elaborated by listing the most horrendous sins a wife could commit as "to be proud, to be unwilling to bear the authority of their husbands, to chide and brawl with bitterness, to forsake their houses…Lastly, to be a cause of grief to their kindred."[114] This loss of an individual's right to assert herself corresponds to the loss of identity a married woman should endure for her husband's sake as English culture expected.

Even if a woman acted in a way that seemed contradictory to her prescribed feminine duty, writers sometimes found it possible to praise her for upholding the social order either by manipulating gender roles to fit the situation or by the merit of her actions. For example, historian Jerome de Groot studied the way in which civil war

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[113]Judith Bennett and Amy Froide, eds., Singlewomen *in the European Past, 1250-1800,* Philadelphia, 1999. The essays by Amy Froide "Marital Status as a Category of Difference: Singlewomen and Widows in Early Modern England" and by Judith Bennett and Amy Froide "A Singular Past" discuss the social, cultural, and economic limitations placed upon women who diverged from the norm and led lives without husbands.

[114] Perkins, *Christian Economy*, 173.

society viewed and wrote about women who suffered combat. This experience did not conform to the ideal experience for an English lady. He reports that the Countess of Derby was celebrated after enduring a siege for stepping out of gender roles in order to defend the status quo. De Groot describes the "patronising fashion" in which society explained her behavior to demonstrate how fluid gender roles could be and how easily one could justify the adoption of a new identity and role in certain situations with society's approval.[115]

It seems that contemporary male writers could only agree on one universal duty for women within proper feminine behavior: submission to a husband. These writers' supplementary ideas of women's virtues contradicted each other on the appropriate goals and behavior of women. They disagreed on the education of women, their capacity for authority, and their inherent moral nature. Brathwait wrote, "Virtue is the life of action, action the life of man, without the latter, all our days are useless."[116] He believed that as long as the actions and behavior of an individual remained discretionary, had direction, and were strengthened by instruction and learning, they exhibited virtue. This obscure advice opened the door for the approval of many types of behavior for women, particularly the attainment of an education. Du Bosc also believed that "the spirit can not be well contented with ignorance."[117] A woman must have learning to understand and practice the complicated virtues imposed by social norms. He argues that the lauded

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[115] De Groot, "Mothers, Lovers, and Others," 198.

[116] Richard Brathwait, *The English Gentlewomen* (London, 1631) in Joan Larsen Klein, ed., *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, 240. Brathwait's courtesy book for men is concerned with much more practical matters than the moral issues he discusses for women.

[117] Du Bosc, *The Complete Woman*, 264.

virtues of discretion, silence, and modesty could easily transform into the viles of imprudence, babble, and more imprudence when untempered by education. The manner in which several of the women of the English Civil War had been educated and demonstrated their intelligence is the subject of the next chapter.

It appears safe to say that the majority of the advice literature agreed upon the primary feminine virtues as the possession of chastity, demureness, frugality, diligence in house, devotion, and meekness. Historians Keith Thomas and Jerome Nadelhaft add the necessity of silence in women as a valued sign of obedience.[118] The general disagreement among contemporary authors revolved around the importance of chastity in the total estimation of a woman's worth. Du Bosc made an excellent argument on the inadequacy of assessing a woman based solely upon her chastity. "If virtue has two extremes which equally offend it [frigidity and promiscuity], we should not use the one to defend us from the other…or cast ourselves into the fire to save us from the water."[119] However, Du Bosc hints at the possible superiority of women in that they have the intelligence to evade the trap of promiscuity, the vice of which their husbands partake liberally.

As mentioned previously, sexuality and beauty hypothetically offered women their only means to usurp the male's power within society. Sexuality, in its actual and imagined context, played a large role in the way in which the community disciplined

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[118] Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20, No. 2 (April 1959), 214. See also Nadelhaft, "The Englishwoman's Sexual Civil War," 565-6. "Hic Mulier," B3 sarcastically summarized society's expectation of a perfect woman with "bashfulness in your cheeks, chastity in your eyes, wisdome in your words, sweetnesse in your conversation, pitie in your hearts, and a generall and severe modestie in the whole structure or frame of your constitution."

[119] Du Bosc, *The Complete Woman*, 270.

individuals. For the early modern world, sex remained strongly linked to power; theoretically, sexual intercourse could cause a temporary usurpation of power with either sex having power or powerlessness over his or her own bodies. This loss of a man's power to a woman had strong symbolic meaning for English culture and led to stringent moral regulations regarding sexuality. Historian Wiltenburg identified love and lust as the keys to a woman's influence, with sexual attractiveness being the most common and effective source of power in *Disorderly Women and Female Power*.[120] To police sexual lives, gendered and specific insults and threats worked effectively. Due to the lack of privacy, everyone knew, or thought they knew, their neighbors' actions. Contemporary society assumed that a woman only entered the public realm in search of sex due to her weak and lascivious nature. Laura Gowing had earlier analyzed the way in which women exercised some control of their environment by the use of gossip; she claims that shame worked as effectively as court action in governing individuals.[121] A reputation denoted the only interest a woman could call her own, and morality in sexual behavior signified honesty and credibility.

As shown above, there were several legitimate reasons for the prescriptions of gender roles, but the major justification for the early modern direction of behavior based upon gender involved the prevalent fear of disorder. In any society, the prospect of disorder prompts great anxiety; the nation might fall into chaos and collapse, leaving its

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[120] Joy Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville, Va., 1992), 141-3. For this reason, prostitution especially represented an evil of society.

[121] Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (New York, 1998), 119-30. See also "Hic Mulier," A2. The author encouraged the regulation of women by women with "You good women; you that are in the fullness of perfection to be modest, virtuous, chaste, and glorious."

people lost for want of guidance in anarchy. Therefore, the major problem with acknowledging women's claim to a higher status resulted from the fear of their acting collectively to undermine men's authority. Englishmen seemed to group women together as a probable source of rebellion to the authority of the patriarchy of England. England's patriarchs believed all women had the same potential for social disruption as they attributed to men of the lower class. A united and educated female mass movement challenging the philosophy of patriarchy and power threatened the current authorities greatly. Phyllis Mack asserted that this negative response to women's assertiveness resulted from a fear of attack from below and within society.[122] Prior to the war, male authorities took many precautions to prohibit women from forming an identity that would allow for self-assertion, either individual or collective.

Popular literature consistently illustrated what might happen to England if women seized more power. In a collection of allegories titled "Parables Reflecting Upon the Times," for example, the author argued "That the Moone hath too great a share of his influence, and that he was carried away too much by her motions."[123] This reference probably refers to the fear of the Queen's possible influence upon the king's decisions. This likelihood of a foreign influence upon the English sovereign through the marital relationship created great concern as to the whether England's interests were being properly represented. The theme underlying the whole collection of parables illustrates the tragic mistake of listening to a woman. "Hic Mulier" had previously

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[122] Mack, 27. Mack's exact quote was, "Her woman's brain proved to be as dangerous as a nuclear weapon in the paws of a wild animal." Wiltenburg adds, "Women represented disorder, the aspects of nature that man could not control." 19

[123] James Howell, "Parables Reflecting Upon the Times" (Paris, 1643), 47.

proclaimed that the acquisition of power by women represented a major problem for the state of the nation. Obviously, the indecision concerning the rights women deserved and their proper place in public represented a popular topic of debate. "Hic Mulier" notes that "[ambition in women] is an infection that emulates the plague, and throws itselfe amongst women of all degrees."[124]

The danger resulting from this threat could be seen in the press after the relationship of King Charles and Queen Henrietta Maria was discovered. In 1644, the Parliamentary army intercepted a letter from the queen to the king and published it as "The King's Cabinet Opened" for all to read. It confirmed Parliament's accusations that the Queen held a powerful place within the government and proves the influence that her advice had on the king.[125] For much of the population, this represented not only an unacceptable inversion of the gender hierarchy, but also an intolerable state of political affairs. Many espoused the fear that "Without a Parliament, monarchs will be ruled by women, ruled in the bedchamber by them and ruled by them in the state."[126] This fear rests on the previous discussion of the popular perceptions concerning female sexuality. In fact, most of the abuse launched at women in public included sexual innuendoes.

Examples of the obvious influence of a woman over a man, as seen in the monarchy, ignited concern about the subversive power of women in general and held many repercussions for the contemporary understanding of gender. Purkiss wrote that in

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[124] "Hic Mulier," B1.

[125] "The King's Cabinet Opened" (1644), in Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 251-2. The letter states, "My Dear Heart, I believe it is not yet time to put them into execution…But I would have the disbanding of the perpetual parliament first, and certainly, the rest will be easily afterwards." The fact that a French Catholic queen of England had this type of influence over her husband, the English king, during a war with a religious component presented a large issue.

[126] Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, 77.

the early seventeenth century "aggressive, shrewish wives, social upstarts with fancy manner, Puritans and the litigious" threatened the masculine identity of the nation.[127] During the Civil War, even the Royalist Queen seemed just as dangerous to others, which made all women suspect. The use of sexuality to invert the social order appears frequently in men's expressions for their distrust of women. This idea probably stems from the perceptions of a woman's sexual nature and led to much abuse involving sexual symbolism as punishment for leaving the private domestic sphere. For example, Dorothy Laugh wrote *The Lambes Defense Against Lyes* in 1656 to document the harsh treatment she received for preaching in public. She wrote,

> The Mayor's officer came and violently hauled me off the cross, and put me in prison…He was so violent and full of passion he scarce asked me any more questions…whereby they tear my clothes to put on the bridle as they called it, which was a stone weight of iron.[128]

Laugh endured the public removal of her clothes and was made to stand naked with a horse bit in her mouth in a manner very similar to the taming of an animal. The restrictions placed on women should have limited their actions severely as intended by the creators of these punishments. They did not noticeably deter many women.

The creation of a gendered identity rested upon the childhood and adolescent environment: children received strong instructions on the expectations and behaviors required in a relationship. The prescribed familial structure at this time was a man, woman, and children with the father and husband as the head of the unit.[129] As

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[127] Ibid, 23.
[128] From Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 257.
[129] Jack Goody, *The Development of Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge, England, 1983), 1. Goody's comparative and sociological study on the origin of the nuclear family states that this

mentioned previously, an early modern woman's life was organized around her marital status, whether as a maid, wife, or widow. Her life socialized her to obey her husband without question. Contemporaries viewed marriage as the "principal safeguard of the family and society,"[130] and not a place to challenge the social status quo. However, marriage advice shows the inconsistent view of women and their role in the family during early modern England. Almost all male writers stressed companionable love when appropriate and brute domination at other times. The one commonality with all the views involves the prescription of the hierarchical and patriarchal structure. As Perkins preached, "Couples are of sorts, principal or less principal."[131] Society had little tolerance for a wife usurping her husband's role. However, with the husband away, as with a war, a wife possessed little choice but to act in masculine and rational ways for all of society to see. This resulted in a conflict over culturally prescribed behavior versus practiced behavior and forced society to acknowledge the disparities between the "ideal" and the "reality."

However, contemporaries recognized that more existed to a relationship than practical and necessary activities. While emotion rarely received mention in conduct books, many literary figures romanticized the heterosexual relationship. Although women rarely wrote of sex or sexual desire, Maria Thynne's passionate and teasing letter to her husband shows the type of caring relationship possible within a patriarchal

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choice for living conditions resulted in a drop in mortality rates and control of fertility, which led to a stable population and allowed family members to think of the future and preservation of the family unit.

[130] *Law's*, 30.

[131] Perkins, *Christian Economy*, 157. The man is the principle and therefore deserves more respect and power than the woman deserves. See also Nadelhaft "The Englishwoman's Sexual Civil War," 555. Nadelhaft suggests that popular misogyny relegated women to marital servitude where men used them for companionship, a cure for lust, and procreation.

society. She wrote, "My best beloved Thomken…know that I have not, nor will never forget how you made my modest blood flush up into my bashful cheek at your first letter…thou knowest my mind, though thou dost not understand me."[132] Du Bosc endorsed this type of marriage by saying that "As the ark was between the two cherubim, so is God between two hearts which love each other. He should be the knot of our amities, to make them strong and reasonable."[133] Quite simply, family structures had to be flexible and contingent on many variables to function as a productive unit; this practice involved much negotiation on the issues of partnership and hierarchy, and love and mastery. The ambivalence and ambiguities over the proper feminine behavior for a woman did not coincide with the requirements of a woman during the English Civil War.

As demonstrated in this chapter, the tensions as to what constituted femininity and the proper role of women represented a large area of contention in the pre-Civil War period. The male writers espoused many prescriptive behaviors for women to follow, but they often contradicted each other. With women writing to illustrate the errors upon which the gender roles were based, anxiety grew as to how to maintain the contemporary gender hierarchy. The English Civil War furthered complicated conceptions of gender roles as women publicly proved their capacity to act in traditionally masculine domains.

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[132] Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 148.
[133] Du Bosc, *The Complete Woman*, 283.

CHAPTER III

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND WRITING

Education provided the means for women to intellectually recognize the ambiguities and contradictions of prescribed gender roles and allowed them to seize the opportunities provided through the blurred boundaries and shifting definitions of gender within the context of the English Civil War. As they did for other aspects of women's lives, many writers wrote detailed manuals for the correct educational instruction of women. However, the advice did not always agree with other writers' ideas, much less with the actual education that many women received. Quite simply, the education and socialization of a young girl depended mostly upon the environment and circumstances of her rearing, not on prescription. By examining the male writers' disparaging ideas beliefs on women's education in comparison with what the women recorded receiving, this chapter maintains that through knowledge and self-expression, educated women challenged their feminine role and displayed the inconsistencies between the ideal and the reality of contemporary conceptions of woman.

One of the reasons for the inconsistency of views concerning women's education stemmed from the confusion as to women's legal status. Once they were educated, they might develop the capacity to create coherent viewpoints based on knowledge and intelligence. In addition, if rational, women would not be so submissive and obedient once they understood the arbitrariness of the reasons that justified the gender hierarchy. The debate on a woman's proper education symbolizes a power struggle to uphold

patriarchy by keeping women ignorant of their situation, while knowing that they had to have sufficient learning to be useful members of society. A woman's prescribed education worked as a self-fulfilling prophecy if followed: when constantly socialized to the idea that she is stupid and weak, she will learn to be stupid and weak.

Several male authors spoke unyieldingly on the necessary limitations that should be imposed upon a woman's education. For example, "Hic Mulier" spoke strongly against education and stated that it would destroy the very essence of a woman, arguing that "She that will give her body to have her bodie deformed, will not sticke to give her soule to have her minde satisfied."[134] Put more simply, if a woman would sacrifice the time and her appearance to study, this philosophy implies, she may well contract with the devil. Therefore, she should only learn singing, dancing, music, and other pleasant pursuits. Instructional manual writer Juan Luis Vives also thought that a learned woman would present more negative social attributes than positive ones, both to herself and to those around her. He specifically advised that women should only read what teaches good manners and write "some sad sentences prudent and chaste."[135] Furthermore, Vives feared that a learned woman might desire to teach others, which would irrevocably harm society. "Therefore, because a woman is a frail thing and of weak

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[134] "Hic Mulier, or, The Man-Woman; and Haec Vir, or the Womanish-Man," (1620; repr. ed., Exeter, 1973), B2.

[135] Juan Luis Vives, *A Very Fruitful and Pleasant Book Called the Instruction of a Christian Woman*, trans. Richard Hyrde (1529, repr. ed. London, 1529) in Joan Larsen Klein, ed., Daughters, *Wives, and Widows: Writings by Men about Women and Marriage in England, 1500-1640* (Chicago, 1992), 102. Vives also said, "The subtlety of learning should be nourishment for the maliciousness of their soul." See also Merry Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), who argues that girls were only taught to read for religious reasons, and this is why the educational methods were so different for boys, 146-8.

discretion…a woman should not teach…for the learners commonly do after the teacher with good will."[136]

Others disagreed that educated women would cause harm to society. Philosopher Jacques Du Bosc wrote in favor of women's education and attacked the unfavorable and popular perceptions that pervaded society about the evils of learned women. He seems even to approve of women writing for publication, arguing for the need to record women's ideas in print: "Discourses pass very lightly away, and they have hardly any leisure to note their faults, but writing remains always exposed to the censures of judges who never pardon them."[137] Once the ideas were recorded, there would be substantial evidence upon which to base legitimated ideas of inferiority or equality between the sexes. Otherwise, all ideologies of male superiority merely represented unproved assumptions, not a valid foundation upon which to judge.

Advice writer Richard Brathwait agreed with Du Bosc that for a woman to perform well in society and life, she must have an education. Brathwait deliberately advocates ignoring most of the prescribed ideas of gendered education and states,

> Take upon her to instruct others she will not, such is her humility, albeit every moving posture which comes from her may be a line of direction unto others to follow her. Complement [ceremony] she affects not, as the world takes it. The world in his own nature and unborrowed signification is good and in that sense she admits it; but to be restrained to an enforced formality, she cannot relish it. Whence it is that she prefers the incomparable liberty of her mind before the mutable formality of a deluded age. She desires to be complete in the exercise of goodness, to

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[136] Ibid, 102.

[137] Jacques Du Bosc, *The Complete Woman*, trans. NN (1632, repr. ed. London, 1654) in Klein, *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, 262. Klein suggests that Du Bosc used a secular reasoning based upon reason, experience, and Scripture to suggest an equality of the sexes, 258.

> improve her honor not by titles but by a lovely and lively proficience,
> graced with a continuate practice in all virtues.[138]

Brathwait believed that a woman would utilize an education to enhance her virtues, not to harm society. Thomas Tusser, author of a household almanac, also advocated the education of both male and female as a necessity for society. He wrote that

> We find it not spoken so often for naught,
> That children were better unborn than untaught.[139]

Regardless of the writings of these secular authors, different religious denominations remained divided upon the necessity of education in living a good life. Puritanism encouraged believers to examine and record their personal lives and experiences in an effort to better themselves.[140] This practice, probably unintentionally, led many members of the religious sects to question the status quo of the social order and its origin to better understand their place in society and their relationship to God. By the act of self-reflection and critical writing, Puritan women had the opportunity to gain an education of a different sort than usually available. However, the Quakers, who allowed women to preach, did not like the idea of education for any of their followers, male or female. Mack suggests that Quakers believed that words seduced a mind, which transformed the student into a much truer whore than any sexual activity that seduced the body.[141]

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[138] Richard Brathwait, *The English Gentlewoman* (London, 1631) in Klein, ed. *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, 236-7.

[139] Thomas Tusser, *The Points of Housewifery, United to the Comfort of Husbandry* (London, 1580) in Klein, ed. *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, 228.

[140] Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 41.

[141] Mack, *Visionary Women*, 144. Mack describes Quaker views on education as "the mortification of the intellect."

It seems from an examination of contemporary women's writings that a woman's identity and personal achievements rested on many factors: the attitude of her parents toward education, the attitude of her parents toward women, the accessibility of materials and books, the family's social status, and the individual desire to sacrifice for personal study. All of these directly influenced the quantity and quality of education received. Quite simply, most of these factors depended on the environment in which women were raised. While the writings on the proper education for a female might have influenced attitudes toward female education, a parent could, and did, ignore society's expectations. The beliefs ingrained while young tend to form the outlook through which a person makes sense of the rest of his or her life. Margaret Cavendish argued later in the century that nurture, not nature, prevented women from attaining their full potential.[142] Many women protested that ignorance ensured the subordination of women and argued for their right to an education. These post-war writings will be discussed in more detail in Chapter V.

Political historian James Daybell suggests that women's increased participation in the public sphere during the English Civil War owed itself partly to higher literacy rates- and thus to greater educational opportunities for women. As noted in Chapter I, the number of women who could read at this time increased greatly. Women had more access to current news, important information, and many novel and radical ideas during

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[142] Jacqueline Pearson, "'Women May Discourse…as Well as Men': Speaking and Silent Women in the Plays of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 4, No. 1 (Spring, 1985), 35. Cavendish wrote, "The worst result of exclusion from education is that women come to believe in their own inferiority."

these years.[143] When the war disrupted normal relationships and prescribed roles and behaviors, many women had the intellectual capacity and opportunity to process a variety of information and to form their own beliefs, which justified their acting autonomously. Historian Anne Laurence has argued that "The war provided many women with the opportunity to exercise initiative in public in ways which had not been possible in peacetime."[144] An education develops critical and independent thinking through the exposure to knowledge, and, because society limited the acceptable topics of discussion for women, they had to discover for themselves the importance and validity of the issues underlying the war.

Several women of the civil war era wrote of their childhood learning, and they displayed great pride in their personal intellectual capabilities. They obviously viewed the relationship between their bodies, souls, minds, and hearts in a different manner than social authorities assumed women should. These women seem to be the ones who documented their thoughts on the war and its causes. During the seventeenth century, most children, both boys and girls, received an informal education at home, either through their parents or private tutors. If the father or mother allowed, a girl could learn the same subjects as her brother by the same means.

One example of a woman taking advantage of the education available and using it to enhance her life is Lucy Hutchinson. Hutchinson described her adolescence

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[143] James Daybell, "Introduction: Rethinking Women and Politics in Early Modern England" in James Daybell, ed. *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700* (Hampshire, England, 2004), 4.

[144] Anne Laurence, "Women's Work and the English Civil War," *History Today* 42 (June 1992), 25.

beginning with her parents' relationship; she described her father as liberal due to his lenient attitude toward her mother. Hutchinson stated that she received an excellent education due to her beauty. It is notable that she chose to boast of her "masculine" propensity to learning while mentioning her "feminine" attribute of beauty. Hutchinson provides an excellent example of the expansion of conceptions of gender. She wrote with great satisfaction of her scholastic accomplishments, stating that she was "so apt that I outstripped my brothers."[145] The repercussions of her natural eagerness to learn led to a different sort of gendered education than the usual experience where boys learned formal material such as Latin and girls learned social skills such as singing. Hutchinson's father took pride in her secular achievements, while her mother taught her the tenets of Christianity. Hutchinson parlayed all this information into a personal and sophisticated philosophy that stressed rationality and Christianity within a mind that cannot be classified as either feminine or masculine but merely independent.

Brilliana Harley also received an exceptional education due to her familial situation. She was raised in the Netherlands, which some, such as Lord Clarendon, have stated explains the source of her tenacious Puritan religious beliefs. Harley later utilized her husband's prominent position to educate herself about the English government and current events, while all the time reading religious works voraciously. As an example of her independent thought process, she studied Martin Luther's writings for herself. Although she agreed with most of his conclusions, she concluded with pity that his

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[145] Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (1806) in Roger Hudson, ed., *The Grand Quarrel: Women's Memoirs of the English Civil War* (Gloucestershire, England, 2000), 4.

understanding allowed him “no peace in righteousness.”[146] Her insight provides an excellent illustration of the type of original thinking that current religious beliefs and exceptional educational opportunities might allow a woman.

Margaret Cavendish's father died while she was young, but she matured within a wealthy environment, which she herself described as "orderly." She praised her mother for "maintaining us to the height of her estate, but not beyond it."[147] Due to the status of her large and wealthy family, Cavendish could afford to ignore her social and feminine duties. Cavendish revealed a brilliant mind from a young age and took great joy in scholarly pursuits. Her husband encouraged these pursuits throughout her life although he displayed an opposite predilection toward formal education than his wife did. Cavendish felt the need to explain the rearing of her husband, the Duke of Newcastle. "For as he was born a gentleman, so he was bred like a gentleman," she explained. She seems apologetic at times about his lack of scholarliness, but she extols his virtues by stating that "He hath an excellent natural wit and judgment."[148] Their marital relationship, although one of two exceptional individuals, is an example of a prosperous partnership in marriage with complementary and different personalities that supported each others’ individual pursuits.

Anne Conway also had the privilege of a wealthy upbringing. She taught herself Latin, Greek, math, and philosophy (masculine pursuits) while developing social graces

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[146] Brilliana Harley, *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley, wife of Sir Robert Harley, of Brampton Bryan, Knight of Bath* (London, 1854), 52-3.

[147] Margaret Cavendish cited in Roger Hudson, *The Grand Quarrel,* 5. Hudson compiled a mixture of all her writings that related to the war and did not distinguish from which work he selected certain passages.

[148] Ibid, 13-14.

and charm (feminine pursuits). Her lack of formal education, which women rarely attained, led her to develop her organization of knowledge and a different world-view than her contemporaries, both male and female. As most women only received informal education, the creation of a novel world-scheme to process information is a testament to her raw intelligence. Believing that theology and philosophy could not be treated separately, she sought to reconcile the evidence of secular evils, such as human suffering, with the existence of a benevolent and all-powerful creator. Conway read everything available and processed it all. At a later age, she persuaded her brother's tutor, Henry More, to tutor her, but by this time, she had developed a very independent mind. More said of Conway, "She was one that would not give up her Judgment entirely unto any."[149] The independence that developed from intelligence and knowledge led her to study the philosophy of war rather than the strategy.

These women formed an intellectual and informed understanding of their environment, and they began to speak and write intelligently. More English women wrote during the civil war than in any previous period about their personal experiences, beliefs, and ideas. These acts of writing led to questions about the appropriateness of a patriarchal government that required the submission of women. Diane Purkiss explained that the "process of understanding politics through narratives about sex and gender and the instability of both begins well before 1660."[150] The debates date back to at least ancient Greece and Aristophanes' *Lysistrata.* Although "Haec Vir" explained that

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[149] Anne Conway, *Conway Letters; the Correspondence of Anne, viscountess Conway, Henry More, and their Friends, 1642-1684,* ed. Marjorie Hope Nicholson (New Haven, Ct., 1930), 378.

[150] Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender, and Politics during the English Civil War* (New York, 2005), 6.

custom and tradition do not present a valid argument for a way of life,[151] men used custom and tradition more often than not to explain the gender hierarchy.

Due to this hierarchy and separation of spheres according to custom, educated women justified themselves and their transgression into the public world of controversial writing. They typically began their work with an introduction of themselves and an explanation of why they felt the need to publish and enter a masculine domain. The most commonly identified motivations to write included the spiritual purpose of self-examination and advice to children. Several historians have interpreted this common strategy in their documents as proof of the low self-esteem of and the conformity to stereotypes by seventeenth-century female writers.[152] However, these women actually used the prescribed gender roles in their prefaces to camouflage many of the possibly subversive ideas contained in the body of their writings.

Women who deliberately broadcast their subversive ideas through publication endured many attacks upon their bodies, minds, and reputations. For drawing attention to themselves in this manner, they commonly suffered accusations of promiscuity and madness, the latter because authorities traditionally used insanity to delegitimize any oppositional discourse by either men or women. Nevertheless, this slander had worse implications for women than for men because women were already viewed as mentally weak and susceptible to madness by their nature. In order to combat this type of slander,

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[151] "Hic Mulier", B2. "I might instance in a thousand things that only Custome and not Reason hath approved. To conclude Custome is an Idiot." She states that real men would appreciate women despite Custome.

[152] Berenice A. Carroll, "Introduction" in Berenice A. Carroll, ed, *Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays* (Chicago, 1976), xii. This early study of women's history and writing reflects the bias of traditional history.

Jerome Nadelhaft suggests that proto-feminists had to praise women along with damning men to prove their worthiness.[153] When women questioned social and political definitions, the proponents of the masculine ideology felt threatened and acted defensively. The women participating in this challenge to male authority were specifically called "mad" and punished through social, and sometimes legal, means.[154]

The written sources left by women offer invaluable insight into the feminine world of civil war England. To adequately understand what the documents say, it is imperative to understand the strategies that female writers employed to make their works less offensive to contemporary readers. Women knew the difficulty of expressing themselves in such a predominantly masculine society. Many women also realized that once in print they could not defend themselves against the manipulation or misinterpretation of their ideas. The common female practice of circulating ideas in manuscript allowed women more control over the viewers of their ideas, at least hypothetically. Furthermore, it was considered "immodest" of a woman to draw attention to herself as happened through publishing material. Therefore, the majority of educated women masked most of their ideas and thoughts on the forbidden topics of power, rights, and gender within personal letters, memoirs, and diaries. Now, historians generally agree that most of these women's writings were eventually intended for a

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[153] Jerome Nadelhaft, "The Englishwoman's Sexual Civil War: Feminist Attitudes towards Men, Women, and Marriage, 1650-1740," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 43, No. 4 (1982), 560-1. "Even attempting to applaud female achievements exposed one to denunciation; self–congratulations violated the valued, supposedly feminine, trait of modesty."

[154] Maria Magro, "Spiritual Autobiography and Radical Sectarian Women's Discourse: Anna Trapnel and the Bad Girls of the English Revolution." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 2, Issue 34, (Spring 2004), 425.

wider public consumption, but not while they were alive.[155] Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing claim that "Their words were mediated by a set of conventions: established literary forms, the familiar language of pleading, or the lawyers' courtroom idiom."[156] Perhaps this explains why historians have misunderstood these women for so long.

Literary historian Elizabeth Clarke contends that when women wrote, they had to consciously use a "double voice,"[157] referring to the use and display of the feminine tones and virtues required by patriarchy to mask the actual dissent within their works. Roger Hudson agrees, noting that "Conformity to stereotypes of femininity was crucial to the communication of any political opinion at all, and this gendering extended to the choice of rhetorical form and style."[158] Consequently, many contemporary women, such as Anne Conway, displayed anxiety at the incongruity between the social ideal of women and their actual selves.[159]

Several examples of women utilizing these strategies of disguised discord exist throughout the literature of the seventeenth century. However, the most obvious examples are from the civil war period. Most women of this time kept their

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[155] Roger Hudson, *The Grand Quarrel: Women's Memoirs of the English Civil War* (Gloucestershire, Eng., 2000), 2.

[156] Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing, *Women's World in Seventeenth Century England: A Sourcebook* (New York, 2000), 11.

[157] Elizabeth Clarke, "Beyond Microhistory: The Use of Women's Manuscripts in a Widening Political Arena" in James Daybell, ed. *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700* (Hampshire, 2004), 212.

[158] Hudson, *The Grand Quarrel,* 224.

[159] Pearson, "Women May Discourse," 35. Although she discusses many writers in the later part of the century, she implies that this was a prevalent occurrence among female writers throughout the seventeenth century. Purkiss stated that a possible threat from women's writing was the usurpation of "men's power to beget books [being equated] with women's power to give birth," 192. For example, Anne Finch and Katherine Philips became depressed and psychosomatic when writing, while Dorothy Osborne and Mary Wortley Montagu only felt comfortable using their gifts in letters or translations.

controversial writings private on the surface to show superficial submission and devotion to their husbands. They tried to appear within the patriarch's shadow. For example, Brilliana Harley had a tendency to write her controversial thoughts on current events only in postscripts, keeping the body of the letters of a very personal nature. Another way for women to distract attention from the ideas in their works involved apologizing for and justifying their writing in an introduction. Even the controversial Ester Sowernam included a justification for her writing in her introduction to *Ester hath hang'd Haman*, although the body of her work clearly asserts her right to write. Mary Ellen Waithe observes that Margaret Cavendish proves extremely difficult to understand since she urged women to maintain their feminine virtues while at the same time aspire to gain intellectual and physical strength.[160] These types of motifs could conceal the contents of the works if taken out of context.

Anne Conway provides a well-known example of a woman writing "masculine" ideas within feminine limitations. Conway, who was married to Edward, Viscount Conway, an active member of Parliament throughout the war, never published her writings while alive, and her friends did it for her posthumously and anonymously. She crossed the gender boundary into intellectualism completely, but only her most trusted friends knew of the more "masculine" mind behind the feminine façade. Conway formed the center and central link of an intellectual community that contained powerful men such as Henry More, Johann Gottfried von Leibniz, and William Penn. Conway wrote influential philosophical discourses on difficult and abstract concepts such as

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[160] Mary Ellen Waithe, ed. *Modern Women Philosophers, 1600-1900* (Boston, 1991), xxv-xxvi.

religion and nature. Her writings circulated privately among a small, educated community. Her most acclaimed work, *Principles of Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy,* appeared in print in the 1690s and criticized scholars from Aristotle to Descartes while managing to synchronize Christianity and science.[161] Historian Marjorie Hope Nicholson claims that Conway had an amazing ability to recognize the changing world and fuse traditional philosophy with contemporary events for a coherent worldview.[162] However, her works never mention the hazardous issues of gender or sexuality.

By contrast with Conway, Margaret Cavendish did publish in her lifetime. Although she apologized in an introduction to one of her many works for "that little wit I have,"[163] she continued to adopt philosophical and historical in her writing that directly challenged patriarchy and the submission of women. Jerome Nadelhaft wrote that "In Cavendish's scheme, women's experiences should be valued rather than denigrated for their particularity, as well as for their superiority to statesmen's warped accounts."[164] She constantly encouraged other women to think and speak for themselves. A character in one of her plays asserted, "Speaking belongs as much to the Female Sex as to the

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[161] Waithe, *Modern Women Philosophers,* 45. Conway's *Principles* stresses the philosophy that every being is alive and capable of motion, and motion explains all principles of reason under the divine influence of God.

[162] Conway, *Conway Letters,* xxv.

[163] Cavendish in Hudson, *The Grand Quarrel*, 110.

[164] Nadelhaft, "The Englishwoman's Sexual Civil War," 39. See also Jacqueline Pearson "Women May Discourse," 38. Pearson also analyzed Cavendish's controversial belief that women had a talent for thought but society prevented them the exercise. Waithe, *Modern Women Philosophers,* 5. Waithe stated that Cavendish wrote because she desired fame, but there were only three ways to attain fame: government, military conquest, and philosophy. Cavendish chose philosophy. Purkiss, *Gender, Literature and Politics,* 192. Purkiss stated that a possible threat to women's writing was "men's power to beget books is again equated with women's power to give birth."

Masculine…women may discourse of several subjects as well as men."[165] Critics, however, commonly recognized Cavendish as both a novelty and a phenomenon, and her patron, John Evelyn, called her "a mighty pretender to learning."[166] Her intellectual capacities nonetheless shine through her work. Although critics commonly described her as deranged, Cavendish also created many of her main characters, including heroic women and female scholars, in a celebration of unconventional women.[167] In her academic pursuits, she had the unwavering support of her husband, who even added to his wife's works by personally praising female genius.[168] Margaret Cavendish voiced her opinion of English society and culture.

Many women affected by the English Civil War felt the need to record their experiences for posterity. Lucy Hutchinson's time spent in battle and her direct involvement in the events of the English Civil War allowed her to observe current events and form her own independent opinions. When she came to write of them, she emphasized her active role as an agent of history and author of history. Her literary writing style has kept past historians from recognizing the acute historical perceptions in her work. Her family history meets the standards required of femininity, but it also screens the political and national context that engulfed her life. Devoney Looser writes of her in *British Women and the Writing of History, 1670-1820*, "Hutchinson wrote her

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[165] Pearson, "Women May Discourse," 38. Pearson cites Cavendish's *Youths Glory and Deaths Banquet*.

[166] Hudson, *The Grand Quarrel,* xix.

[167] Pearson, "Women May Discourse," 33. Pearson stated that Cavendish was unique in her insistence upon publication and endured accusations of personal sexual immorality, plagiarism, and madness.

[168] Ibid, 40. Pearson wrote, "Female control of language is shown winning the approval of a male hierarchy in a very direct way."

own life and her *Memoirs* in a form that was framed as political history but that also employed the more idealized conventions of romance."[169]

Other strategies that women used to distract attention from their sex involved the use of religion to cover their political rhetoric, which will be explored in the next chapter. Society allowed women to speak of God, since one could argue that religion straddled the boundary between public and private sphere, but one's relationship with God remained a private and therefore domestic matter. Despite the temporary success of this strategy, many women chose yet another method to speak their minds without disrupting the gender hierarchy. Possessing a great awareness of the censure that other women endured when criticizing society and of what they might endure themselves for challenging the social order, they disarmed and collected men's favorable opinions by also voicing disgust against women. One petition written by women stated, "We are not ignorant that there hath been a great many malicious and ungracious reports cast upon us Women, as that we should weare the breeches, that our tongues are perpetuall…[to] disturbe the peace and quietnesse of their rest, that we are cankers in their Estates."[170] They then differentiate themselves from these disorderly women by saying that "we [are] the good wives, not the bad wives, chaste and unchaste, Scolds and Turtle-doves."[171] Perhaps they spoke of women such as Anne Wentworth, who used the reigning political rhetoric to justify her separation from her husband. For this,

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[169] Devoney Looser, *British Women and the Writing of History, 1670-1820* (Baltimore, 2000), 35. Looser identifies Hutchinson's fascinating manner of conforming to wifely submission for the most part and then switching to third person to describe her actions when acting differently.

[170] "The Humble Petition of Many Thousands Wives and Matrons" (London, 1642), 4. Unfortunately, the missing word is illegible.

[171] Ibid, 8.

Wentworth was called "an impudent hussy, a disobedient wife…one that ran away from her husband, and the like."[172]

These women writers of the English Civil War certainly do not represent the majority of the English female population. However, these women used their privileged education to transgress boundaries and to express themselves as men had done. Due to their ability to recognize the ambiguities of society's prescribed gender roles and their independent faith in their individual capacities, they could act in ways that challenged their submissive social role. In the lives of English women writers and their insightful works, the blurring of gender boundaries is apparent. Nevertheless, these women witnessed feminine transgressions into even more masculine domains than writing during the war, as the next chapter shows.

[172] Keith Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects," *Past and Present,* No. 13 (1958), 49.

CHAPTER IV

BLURRING BOUNDARIES:

WOMEN IN DEFENSE, RELIGION, AND POLITICS

The blurring of gender boundaries during the English Civil War occurred most obviously within the public realms of defense, religion, and politics. These areas all straddled the duties of a woman in the private sphere and the duties of a man in the public sphere. Defense entailed fighting to protect the home; religion involved a personal search for salvation; and politics included ensuring that the interests of the family were secure. Of course, these "domestic" duties provided an easy and socially acceptable way to redefine the gendered spheres temporarily. By tweaking the ambiguous descriptions of a woman's duties, women created a feminine justification for their transgression into the public masculine realm. These public demonstrations by women in the context of war show the blurring of gender most evidently.

Of the three public spheres that women entered during the war, the most obvious occurred in the area of defense. The English Civil War left many women no choice but to confront the horror of combat in their own personal lives, although men had historically reserved the arena of battle for themselves in a search for glory. Many wives saw their husbands leave to fight, and a few women directly participated in the battles. Although fighting involves aggressiveness, which decidedly is not a feminine trait, a woman has always shared responsibility for the protection of her home and family. This duty represents a domestic and private behavioral expectation. The vague behavioral

boundaries discussed above could not enforce nor define when and where a woman could engage in hostilities amid a civil war. With the fighting occurring in towns and backyards, the war forced women to defend the family's property in lieu of their husbands. This role blurred the accepted duties prescribed for their gender. Most women who engaged in combat had the specific duties of messenger, cook, laundress, and nurse. Although most did not act as combatants, they witnessed the same trauma that men did. Linda Grant DePauw stated in *Battle Cries and Lullabies: Women in War from Prehistory to Present,* "Women have roles in war… [They] share the glory… [And] share the guilt."[173] Depending upon who documented the events, a woman could even be portrayed as a war hero.

James Strong provides an account of women's roles as active participants in the battles of the English Civil War. His pamphlet of 1645, "Joanereidos: or Feminine Valour" celebrates "the warrioresses of the Battle of Lyme, as they deserve commendations in themselves, so they are proposed as example unto others."[174] His description of the battle lists a woman's possible duties during a siege, such as helping to build fortifications and carrying powder while "not to think any one's life dear."[175] Another example of women in combat includes Lucy Hutchinson's chronicling of a soldier's wife after she was questioned about tending the wounded in the heat of battle. "She had done nothing but what she thought was her duty," Hutchinson reported, "in

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[173] Cited in Shannon French, *The Code of the Warrior: Exploring Warrior Values Past and Present* (Lanham, MD, 2003), 108.
[174] James Strong, "Joanereidos: or Feminine Valour" (1645, reprinted 1674), 1.
[175] Ibid, 1.

humanity to them, as fellow creatures, not as enemies."[176] Although nursing might be construed as a feminine duty, potentially sacrificing one's life to save an enemy soldier went far behind the traditional category of nursing. Apparently practicing gendered behavior and thus avoiding contact with war did not seem as important against the background of life and death decisions.

The fullest account of a woman independently defending her home involves Brilliana Harley and the siege of Brampton Bryan. Her husband, Sir Robert Harley, spent the beginnings of the war traveling and politicking as a member of Parliament. He desired that his wife remain at their estate, Brampton Bryan, because he thought it would enhance family prestige within the county. He apparently believed that she would be safe due to the traditional gentry loyalties of the area. When Harley first wrote to her son of her troubles in 1638, she mentioned that "Your father dous not knowe I send. Therefore take no notis of it, to him, nor to any." Her apparent independence probably reflects the fact that her husband had remained away from the home for most of their marriage. From the beginning of the Harleys' marriage in 1623, Harley engaged herself in financing her husband's political career. Later she held the responsibility of securing the estate with provisions should the worst, a siege, happen. She told her son in 1639, before the outbreak of war, "My comfort is that you are not with me, lest they should take you."[177] Over the course of the Civil War, her letters become more assertive and

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[176] Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (1806) in Roger Hudson, ed. *The Grand Quarrel: Women's Memoirs of the English Civil War* (Gloustershire, Eng., 2000), 105.

[177] Brilliana Harley, *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley, wife of Sir Robert Harley, of Brampton Bryan, Knight of the Bath* (London, 1854), 65.

personal. In 1641, she foreshadowed the path her life would take: "I lose the comfort of your father's company, and am in but little safety, but that my trust is in God."[178]

Harley constantly expressed her fear at the hostile tone of the county and usually accepted her position as wife, rarely questioning her husband's decisions openly. Instead, she directed all her dissent from them to her son. She followed her orders with an unshakable faith in her religion and her husband. In the appropriate wifely manner, she wrote, "I will be willing to do what he [Sir Robert] would have me do…I hope the Lord will deliver me; but they [the Royalists] are most cruelly bent against me."[179] After venturing to the county market and enduring violent scenes and taunts, she voiced her concerns for her personal safety to her husband. However, on June 20, 1642, when Robert Harley stubbornly maintained that his wife was in no danger, Harley wrote to her son, "I doo longe almost to have him [Sir Robert] punisched. I feare your father dous much neglect himself."[180] She knew that her husband had incorrectly assessed the situation at Brampton Bryan. She temporarily begged her son to come to her aid, but she remained virtually alone throughout her war experience.[181] It seems that as the danger grew, so did her reluctance to accept such dire responsibility for the defense of Brampton Bryan and the future of her home, children, and servants. She apparently found comfort in God and her faith, and she resigned herself to her fate

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[178] Harley from Hudson, ed., *The Grand Quarrel,* 40.
[179] Harley, *Letters,* 66.
[180] Ibid, 174.
[181] Ibid, 143. She wrote, "I cannot blame you to be unwilling to leave so deare a father; yet remember, you come to a mother that loves you."

She began writing very rationally and without emotion. She promised, "I purpose to stay as long as it is poscibell, if I live."[182] A week after making the decision to remain in the war-torn county, she sent a cake to her husband. This ambivalence in her understanding of a wife's duties shows the uncertainty of the construct of gender during the time of war. In the opening months of 1643, the Royalists neglected to attack the manor immediately due to a personal regard for Harley and the fact that the seizure of Brampton Bryan was not a military necessity. After several months, though, they attacked the home in July because, unfortunately for her, it had come to represent an intolerable Parliamentarian stronghold within a decidedly Royalist area.[183] Harley wrote more than one letter per week to her son recording her thoughts and fears in detail. During the initial negotiations for surrender amid the seven-week siege, Harley used her intelligence to manipulate the attacking army by claiming she only acted upon her husband's wishes. This strategy of "feminine" ignorance worked for a while, but she soon ordered a "masculine" attack, which she claimed was self-defense. She died of illness during the attack.

Corporal Priamus Davies wrote the sole eyewitness account of the events of the siege at Brampton Bryan. Harley impressed him greatly with her behavior. She took in all the inhabitants of the area who had previously shown her hostility and promised them safety from the violence of the attacking soldiers. She also advised everyone to use his

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[182] Ibid, 177-183. During this period of her letters, she trusts in God, not to save her, but to grant her an afterlife. Her bravery shines through, and she no longer even hints at complaints.

[183] Jacqueline Eales, *Puritans and Roundheads: the Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the Outbreak of the English Civil War* (Cambridge, Eng., 1990), 167. Eales' discussion of the strategy in sieging the Harley home discusses the ambivalence of attacking a neighbor for political reasons.

or her family and friendship connections and their intellect to survive. This strategy utilizes the strengths of both genders: the reluctance to resort to violence of “femininity” and the rational plotting of “masculinity.” Davies recorded with reverence, "That honourable and gallant Lady Harley put herself into a posture of defence against their insolent and illegal proceedings."[184] Harley led the defenders against the devastating conditions of the siege with continuous negotiations and legal arguments. She held hope that her husband and friends could arrive with help if she merely prolonged the conflict. Davies taunted the Royalists to find "more honourable service than to fight a lady."[185] Her only personal wish was for an honourable death. However, she totally trusted in God and her husband until that last moment, while encouraging the men inside the home and continually praying. Davies praised her memory, "By this time, the fame of this noble lady was spread over most of the kingdom with admiration and applause, even of her enemies."[186]

Several other women endured sieges of their homes, forced to defend themselves while their husbands were away. Lady Arundell, a Royalist noblewoman, had command of Wardour Castle while her husband was away fighting. The Parliamentary army offered her refuge but not to the men for which she also held responsibility. She decided to confront the army of 1300 soldiers with the 25 men and women also in the home; she endured a battle for six days and nights that ultimately ended in defeat and the

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[184] Hudson, *The Grand Quarrel,* 85. Davies account can be found in *Calendar and Manuscripts of the Marquess of Bath (*1905).

[185] Ibid, 85.

[186] Ibid, 91.

plundering of her home. Bruno Ryves, writing for *Mercurius Rusticus* in 1643, applauded her and the women for acting "valiant beyond their sex."[187]

Lady Bankes, also a Royalist heiress, occupied Corfe Castle, "one of the impregnable Forts of the Kingdome,"[188] while her husband also fought alongside the king. She found success in battle by throwing hot embers over the side of the castle while the Parliamentary army attacked. She and her servants managed to preserve the fort until a garrison of Royalist soldiers arrived to help. After the war, Parliament tried her as a delinquent Royalist for her actions, independently of her husband, and she spent the rest of her life fighting to save her fortune. The Countess of Derby at Lathom House and the Marchioness of Winchester at Basing House represent other well-known cases of females engaging in war. Whether party affiliation mattered seems doubtful. These examples all illustrate the blurring boundaries of gender in the immediate context of household defense in the English Civil War.

Most homes targeted by the armies were chosen for strategic military purposes. Women like Brilliana Harley had no honest alternative but to endure the combat of the English Civil War. Women historically only engage in combat when boundaries dramatically blur and they are expected to engage in combat. However, Lucy Hutchinson deliberately chose to stay at her husband's side in battle for the duration of the war. By 1643, Hutchinson had already become hardened by the atrocities that she had witnessed. For example, she spoke in a contemptuous and brutal tone of the Earl of

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[187] Stephen Wright, "Lady Arundell", *DNB.* HCG Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds. (Oxford, 2004), 573.

[188] Barbara Donagan, "Lady Bankes," *DNB,* HCG Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds. (Oxford, 2004), 680. Quotes Bruno Ryves from *Mercurius Rusticus.*

Kingston for refusing to fight.[189] She seems to have developed a very masculine perspective during her years in combat. For example, she wrote of battle, “If it were a romance, one should say, after the success, that the heroes did it out of excess of gallantry, that they might better signalize their valour upon a foe who was not vanquished to their hands by the inclemency of the season.”[190] However, she remained decidedly feminine in her devotion to her husband. Once again, the boundaries between genders seem to have blurred. In one scathing attack, she blames a woman for persuading a powerful man to act in a manner inconsistent with the army's interests.[191] Women were divided by their ideologies and beliefs, not united by their sex.

Lucy Hutchinson implies throughout the memoirs of her husband that honor in battle represents the most important distinction that a human can achieve. This notion of honor ultimately justifies in her mind her husband's final decisions that led to his death. She obviously understood the concepts of honor and pride very well. Hutchinson describes her husband much as a blameless god, with "an awe that made him to be equally feared and loved,” and all those who would dare oppose him as "the Devil's exquisite solicitor."[192] The Hutchinson couple has been described as independent characters that, having fought and experienced battle for themselves, decided that anything would be better than a continuation of the war.[193]

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[189] Hutchinson, 83. She uses gendered ideas to defame him, such as calling him a “neuter.”
[190] Ibid, 119.
[191] Hutchinson, *Memoirs*, 169-71.
[192] Hudson, 144-150. Colonel Hutchinson died in prison after arguing with Lucy that she should stop appealing for his life, and his captivity was "the happiest release in the world for him."
[193] Hudson, *The Grand Quarrel*, 159.

Margaret Cavendish, wife of the Duke of Newcastle, also attempted to justify her husband's actions during the war. Both Cavendish and Hutchinson obviously understood the nature of the war, and although on opposing sides, both sought to shed a favorable light upon their husbands' memories. After the Duke ordered the shelling of a town, she admits that his actions caused terror, but she emphasizes his compassion in the chaos that followed the attack. She seems apologetic at times and stresses his "wonted custom and loyalty" to the king as the misunderstood root of his unpopularity.[194] In fact, she displayed pride in her understanding that "he thought it his duty rather to hazard all, than to neglect the commands of his sovereign."[195] Remarkably, Cavendish displayed independent thinking throughout her life, yet she justifies her husband's actions through his obedience to the king.

A reversal of spousal duties with women defending men occurs in both Cavendish's and Hutchinson's writings. However, the marked difference in the portrayals extends from their strong affiliations with the opposing parties. For example, when Newcastle suffered defeat at the Battle of Marston Moor, Lucy claims he endured "great loss and dishonour."[196] Cavendish, Newcastle's wife, describes his actions in glorious terms, stating the "retreat was ordered so well, and with such excellent conduct… [Duke of Newcastle] went on with the greatest courage."[197] Cavendish's and Hutchinson's different personalities and beliefs illustrate the major problem in

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[194] Margaret Cavendish in Hudson, 78
[195] Ibid, 36.
[196] Hutchinson, *Memoirs*, 110.
[197] Cavendish in Hudson, ed., *The Grand Quarrel*, 127-130. Cavendish sought to reestablish her husband's honor after his well-known retreat from battle and flight from the country.

generalizing about "women" as a single group that thought the same way. Although several women challenged the nature of the place of a woman in battle, they did so as individuals and not as a collective entity. The blurring occurred on a more personal level in these examples.

Women also transgressed boundaries within the realm of religion. Along with the disruption of political authority, a crisis occurred in the realm of spiritual authority. For many, the personal crisis that affected them the most involved the religious turmoil that prevailed throughout the mid-seventeenth century. When studying the way in which many denominations and sects challenged the supremacy of the Church of England, scholars have noted the importance that religion provided for the population. Christianity provided an acceptable explanation for the troubles of this world and expectations of happiness in the next world, but, most importantly, traditional religion justified the existing social order, hierarchies, and the distribution of property and wealth.[198] Therefore, to question the church not only invited personal damnation but also implied an attack upon society.

Challenges within the realm of religion had specific consequences for women and conceptions of gender. Popular belief viewed women as more pious than men due to their nature and lifestyle. For example, women possessed more time to meditate, did not need to engage in combat and lived close to death (and therefore God) due to

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[198] Frank O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688-1832* (London, 1997), 6. O'Gorman claims, "Christianity provided a religious sanction for the individual's place in the social order." See also Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 41. The authors assert, "Most people's lives were dominated by their search for salvation and by their desire to lead a Christian life." For a more detailed account of the role of the church, see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 2nd Edition (New Haven, Ct., 2005), 75. Duffy states that the English religion of the early modern period did not involve introspection but instead pragmatically united the nation.

childbirth and menstruation.[199] In addition, Patricia Crawford suggested that society believed that religion was more natural for women than men since women needed more piety to stay virtuous, due to their weak and unstable natures.[200] In fact, mortality was a constant fact of life as one in four persons died under the age of ten, and women's death rate remained consistently high in the early years of their childbearing age probably leading them to want to ensure their salvation. The Countess of Bridgewater wrote a prayer for her daughter that describes her fear and acceptance of death. She wrote,

> Lord Jesus, since thou art pleased my time is come…Lord be not angry…but sweet Christ bring me out of m extremity, and fill my mouth with honour and praise to thee, that I may see this my dear child without any deformity…and if it be thy will, O God, that I should be nor more in this world, Christ raise me to life everlasting.[201]

Although this understanding of a stronger feminine devotion to God due to a weaker body and soul possesses obvious flaws in logic when compared with the reality of the strength of women, seventeenth-century English society strongly believed that weakness, a primary feminine trait, allowed for a more complete holy life due to the ease with which the Holy Spirit could affect them. Therefore, women's religious writings and speaking were frequently seen as divinely supported and sanctioned. This allowance would later have drastic consequences for the political realm.

The Church of England was the most powerful single institution in the nation. It had its own set of courts and an enormous amount of property and wealth. O'Gorman

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[199] Hudson, *The Grand Quarrel*, 220. Hudson uses the popular belief that feminine weakness allowed the holy life without inspiration from the Holy Spirit to explain the support and sanctioning of women's religious activities.

[200] Patricia Crawford, "Anglicans, Catholics, and Nonconformists after the Restoration, 1660-1720," in Dinan and Meyers, eds., *Women and Religion in Old and New Worlds* (New York, 2001), 157.

[201] Countess of Bridgewater, *Meditations*, from Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 20.

stated, "Church and state were one, both divinely ordained, the defence of one being the first line of defence for the other."[202] Therefore, when the king came under attack, so did the church, and the interests of the two were intertwined in the politics of the war.

Many sects challenged the tenets and practices of the Anglican church itself. Within the church before the war, Puritanism had provided the most popular alternative to traditional Anglicanism. Puritans stressed a faith in the Bible rather than Anglican Church traditions, faith through prayer rather than sacraments, and encouraged less distinction between the clergy and the laity. Dorothy Kelly, a Nonconformist widow, voiced the subversive belief that holiness resided in the worshippers, not in a religion or a building. In 1640, her fellow church members wrote,

> She was like a he-goat before the flock, for in those days Mrs. Kelly was very famous for piety and reformation, well known to all, bearing a living testimony against the superstitions and traditions of those days.[203]

The possibility of not needing an established state religion to be pious Christians has appeared in many countries at many times and is not a new argument.

Other women also expressed dissenting opinions concerning the Anglican Church. Lucy Hutchinson, who shared an independent religious philosophy with her husband, viewed the major problem with King Charles as his position as head of the Church of England. The king's politics did not diverge from what she expected of any monarchy but his protection of bishops who displayed "pomp and pride" and their

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[202] O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century*, 6. See also Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 397-8. Duffy describes the origins of the Anglican church, which agitated the "obedient people" of England. The first official act of the religion involved ending the "diversity of opinions" of the sixteenth century.

[203] *Records of a Church of Christ in Bristol: 1640-1687* in Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 60.

"insolent practices" offended her greatly.[204] Rather, Hutchinson viewed relations with God as the most important dynamic of life. Before the war, she voiced extreme concern over the current state of religion, which she described as "superstition to idolatry."[205] Religion played a large role in all her writings.

The nation's religious strife also fostered anxiety in Robert and Brilliana Harley. They viewed all Puritans, or those with similar beliefs, as an extended family and common travelers along the road to salvation through the corruption of England. This attitude may have elevated Harley's sense of her position within society if she viewed herself as a motherly figure to those outside the blood family. Historian Jacqueline Eales suggests that the Harleys loved their godly community more than their blood family.[206] For this reason, Harley told her son that being a good Christian required acting as a good soldier.[207] It seems as though she viewed the contemporary upheaval as a holy war, which explains the drastic sacrifices and spiritual concerns she espoused throughout the period.

A main issue of concern for contemporary England that cannot be overstated grew from the fact that the Anglican church was the state religion of England: the king presided over both church and nation. Pamphlets of the period recognized the difficulty of extracting religion from politics, although several individuals preached in terms hinting at the idea of a separation of church and state. An anonymous author wrote in 1648 that "It is a shame and scandal for us Christians to seek the originall of

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[204] Hudson, *The Grand Quarrel,* x.
[205] Hutchinson, *Memoirs,* 21-2.
[206] Eales, *Puritans and Roundheads,* 43.
[207] Harley, *Letters,* 61.

Government from the inventions of Poets, Orators, Philosophers."[208] He implied that the state's actions should have no bearing on the personal conduct of true believers since only Scripture provided the true way to govern. Political matters should not affect an individual's religion, but rather it should remain above the currents of secular events. He did not address the issue that the leader of the Church of England had the same leader as the government, the king, who was under attack. The war further entangled the state and the church in a defense of tradition.

Many new religious sects, including Quakers, Seekers, Fifth Monarchists, and Muggletonians, also challenged traditional religious norms and presented a radical alternative to Anglican ideas, although none enjoyed the popularity of the Puritans. Many of these religious sects manipulated gender stereotypes to allow women more authority. The Quakers, who left many religious writings and have received the attention of a number of historians, viewed women as perfect agents for speaking God's word because they were humble, receptive, and emotional. The religion still limited women, however, in that the slightest sign of vanity or self-glorification in them was identified as a transition into corruption. After that sin, ambitious women faced ostracism. Quaker men also faced this restraint.

The Quakers, or Society of Friends, shunned all wealth, rank, and political power. For this, they suffered many accusations of attempting to undermine the social order. In fact, Phyllis Mack defined "quaking" as a "statement to social rituals of

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[208] "The Anarchy of a Limited or Mixed Monarchy" (1648), 3

difference and oppression."[209] However, the Quakers concerned themselves more with spiritual salvation than any form of worldly glory. They viewed the time of the English Civil War as a morally corrupt period, and they attempted to distance themselves as much as possible from these superficial and irrelevant concerns. In placing themselves above the concerns of the war, they nonetheless challenged the traditional social order, although there exists little evidence that they deliberately attempted the subversion of class and gender boundaries of which they were accused.

Radical religious sects granted women more respect as individuals than was usual by emphasizing their special access to God.[210] Anna Trapnel of the Fifth Monarchists provides a very good description of the way a woman could use her "religious voice" in public to preach. In 1654, she published four texts as a "passive vessel" for the Lord's word. She would go into trances and experience ecstatic fits in which she left her body and began preaching. Trapnel's work *The Cry of the Stone* enjoyed celebrity status and garnered her many followers.[211] Maria Magro asserts that "Her ecstasies, which are fashioned by Trapnel as moments during which she has no control over her physical person, provide the mark of authenticity of the visionary prophet."[212] However, her later works, including *Strange and Wonderfull Newes from White-Hall* used her status as a dumb woman relaying heavenly messages to condemn

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[209] Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth Century England* (Berkeley, Ca., 1992), 152.

[210] Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 42.

[211] Anna Trapnel, *The Cry of the Stone* (London, 1654).

[212] Maria Magro, "Spiritual Autobiography and Radical Sectarian Women's Discourse: Anna Trapnel and the Bad Girls of the English Revolution," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 2, Issue 34 (Spring 2004), 414.

the government.[213] When she was attacked for treasonous speech in public, she claimed that she held no responsibility for "listeners at the window." For this, she went to prison, where she wrote *Anna Trapnel's Report and Plea, or, A Narrative of Her Journey into Cornwal,* in which she publicly defends her actions to the authorities with a full awareness of her political and social status as a woman.[214]

The Quakers applied the customary stereotypes of women of weakness and ignorance to all the uninformed and unsanctified persons of the world, both men and women.[215] They viewed marriage as the union of spiritual equals, which meant that every feminine duty received esteem in its own right. Mack's study of Quaker women shows that their church continued to support the traditional feminine roles of nurturer, provider, overseer of dependents, political activist, and charity, but it also offered women many more opportunities outside marriage and the home, such as preaching. This example of manipulating gender roles reflects just one of many unorthodox beliefs and practices of the early Quakers. For example, the preachers conflated the best of both masculine and feminine traits and symbolism to illustrate their belief that God acted as both the mother and the father of all humanity. Both men and women held the responsibility of acting as feminine and selfless nurturers and caretakers while also acting as masculine and political agents to secure others' welfare. Everyone should submit to God alone. This tolerant ideology encouraged members of both sexes to speak

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[213] Anna Trapnel, *Strange and Wonderfull Newes from White-hall* (London, 1654).

[214] Anna Trapnel, *Anna Trapnel's Report and Plea, or, A Narrative of Her Journey from London into Cornwal* (London, 1654).

[215] Mack, *Visionary Women,* 148-55. Mack's insights provide the source for the whole paragraph.

and act with the traditional attributes of both men and women. This freedom offered previously unavailable opportunities for Quaker women to express themselves without fear of retribution for acting in manly ways by preaching and writing for public consumption. The religion denied the reality of outward cultural constraints, including gender, and chose to focus upon the individual's inner being to evaluate personal worth. Instead of focusing on the text of the Bible, Mack suggests that they viewed themselves as the biblical characters who also endured hardship.[216] This radical manner of reading the Bible explains how the Quakers dismissed contemporary religious norms.

Quakers believed in the spiritual authority of women as equal to that of men due to their belief in the potential of the soul and their understanding that a religious life meant a total deconstruction of the physical self. Without the body, no obvious distinctions between man and woman existed. Quaker female prophets embraced this authoritative role and described themselves as "seekers embarked on a quest for moral perfection."[217]

Anne Conway, the great intellectual, found herself intrigued by and then drawn to the beliefs of the Quakers, although society viewed the religion as a lunatic and dangerous sect. Conway's letters of the 1660s describe the marginal and suspect reputations of the Quakers, and her investigation of the religion. Perhaps the Anglican church did not meet her private intellectual and emotional concerns, specifically her inability to handle her painful and incurable sickness. Other religions and philosophies

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[216] Mack, *Visionary Women*, 138.

[217] Ibid, 89. Mack later asserts that these actions did not represent a movement for women's rights or feminism since the women did not even acknowledge their sex or "outward being." 174.

could not ease her pain and suffering. Conway wrote of listening to other women's troubles in an attempt to better appreciate her personal situation. Interestingly, her letters never mention her husband or their relationship. However, the fact that she compared herself to less fortunate women illustrates her unmentioned awareness of gender. Originally, Conway found the Quakers earnest but irrational in their "opinion touching the extension of the soul of Christ."[218] However, she began to engage in intellectual debates with More on the possible merits of such a religious ideology. She persuaded him to listen to the Quakers' teachings, maintaining that "The reading of their bookes lately had in a great measure freed me from former prejudicate opinions, but their conversation doth much more reconcile me to them."[219]

Conway then began to correspond with the prominent Quaker William Penn. They engaged in philosophical and theological discussions on the true merits of the religion. Ultimately, Conway's attraction to the Quakers conquered her doubts, probably due to the stress on extension of the soul rather than the physical body or biological sex. Mack claims that Conway converted due to the "deep calm in the midst of suffering" that the Quakers exhibited throughout the mid- to late-seventeenth century.[220]

The relative equality of the sexes within these religious sects held significant impact for the social constructs of gender. As religion and the search for personal salvation remained an individual's private quest, many sects allowed women to act in a

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[218] Conway, *Conway Letters,* 417.
[219] Ibid, 407.
[220] Mack, *Visionary Women,* 379.

manner they claimed would help them and others. Spiritual assistance was considered a domestic task in a private sphere. Historian Keith Thomas estimated that at least three hundred women took the opportunity to preach and prophesy between 1630 and 1670, although the number diminished as authorities enforced limitations toward the end of this period.[221] These women, like Anna Trapnel, usually manipulated the understood gender roles regarding the separation of the public and private spheres in an effort to appeal to the widest possible audience. Katherine Gillespie recently claimed that women preachers articulated their self-hood, which balanced a weak body with a strong soul and transcended all worldly things and ideas.[222] Maria Magro contended that female sectarian writers dealt with "negotiating [the] paradox of being spiritually equal but corporeally unequal."[223] Furthermore, these religious sects opened the path for the public questioning of ideas of government and liberty based upon individual rights.

Religion offered many opportunities for women to assert their individual interests. Keith Thomas believes that these peripheral religions led the way to "reason, natural right, popular consent, and common interest."[224] This open discussion had several repercussions for women in the political arena, allowing someone like Elizabeth Poole to write "A Vision: Wherein is Manifested the Disease and Cure of the Kingdome" in 1648 as a statement to Parliament. She warned the members that "The

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[221] Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects," 47.

[222] Katherine Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent in Seventeenth Century England: English Women Writers and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Eng., 2004), 205. See also Merry Wiesner *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Eng., 2000), 214. Wiesner also analyzed the way in which women used scripture, not religious leaders' teachings, to justify their independent religious views.

[223] Magro, "Spiritual Autobiography", 414.

[224] Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects," 54.

Lord hath a controversie with the great and mighty men of the earth."[225] She called upon them to humble themselves before the Lord for the sake of the nation.

Many women parlayed their religious authority into the right to speak upon political matters. Several pamphlets illustrate the strategy of using a religious polemic to subtly criticize contemporary government, subtlety being important, since even though the boundary between genders blurred during the war, men reacted harshly to women entering the most public space of all, politics. However, as the oppressed section of society, women involved in religion had a different understanding of politics and government than men demonstrated. Gillespie explained that, for one thing, women tended to view politics as "done by" ordinary people rather than "to them."[226] Most of the unconventional religions understood the importance of theories that addressed religious toleration, separation of church and state, and ideas of privacy and independence. These sects espoused these ideas and thought that God could call on anyone to act in His name on any level. For this reason, both men and women needed to be capable of functioning domestically, economically, and politically. However, they condemned both men and women who only sought personal power and authority.[227] As an example, Margaret Fell suffered ostracism after listeners interpreted personal ambition within her preaching.

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[225] Elizabeth Poole, "A Vision: Wherein is Manifested the Disease and Cure of the Kingdome" (1648) in Suzanne Trill, Kate Chedgzoy, and Melanie Osborne, eds., *Lay by Your Needles Ladies, Take the Pen: Writing Women in England, 1550-1700* (London, 1997), 165.

[226] Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent*, 11-27. She argues that these ideas were the seeds from which the later liberal political theories grew.

[227] Mack, *Visionary Women*, 323.

Many men and women used this ideology of individualism in the search for salvation to parlay self-sovereignty within politics. As deliverance had great import for the eternal soul, many people viewed their worldly condition as having paramount significance for their individual afterlife. For example, Katherine Chidley petitioned Parliament in 1641 for religious independence and attacked patriarchy, but the petition does not specifically focus upon women's rights. Chidley specifically attacked the Anglican practice of "churching" and identified it as a main reason that sects were growing in popularity.[228] Many prophets and prophetesses of the Civil War period directly condemned the Church and the aristocracy in a "spiritual and social protest."[229] While these sects, by their very actions, promoted the increased authority of women and a lessening of the burdens of gender limitations, even the most radical women recognized the danger to their persons that would occur in an inversion of the social order. Prophecy represented the only legitimated public authority for women, and they used this power to transgress into other realms.[230]

Yet another effect of the religious sects upon politics is that when women attempted to enter the political realm, they did so cautiously and armed with a strong religious justification. One women's petition states right away, "All these under

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[228] Katherine Chidley, *The Justification of the Independent Churches of Christ* (London, 1641), 7.

[229] Mack, *Visionary Women,* 4.

[230] Esther Gilman Richey, *Politics of Revelation* (Columbia, Mo., 1998), 2. Richey wrote, "The prophet spanned the gap between private and public spirituality, revealing on the one hand the intimacy of a relationship with God, and on the other, a calling to social and political service."

correction, gives us great cause to suspect, that GOD is angry with us."[231] Women used the justification of God much more than men did when petitioning to sanction their arguments in an effort to be heard. Women then used their divine validation to demonstrate that they might be of use to the government and that the heavenly good of the nation was at stake. However, the authors of "A True Copie of the Petition of the Gentlewomen, and Tradesmen-wives" felt the need to further explain themselves in petitioning Parliament and avoid public disgrace and humiliation. Knowing the restrictions placed upon their gender, this group of petitioners stated that "It may be thought strange, and unbeseeming our sex to shew our selves by way of Petition to this Honourable Assembly."[232] However, they persuasively stress the points that Christ requires the same behavior of women as men and that Christ demands the happiness of women and men, and, most importantly, that the acts of government meant that "Women as well as Men have felt the smart of their fury."[233]

The most revealing aspect of this petition involves the concluding explanation that the authors do not seek personal glory or an inversion of the gender hierarchy. They wrote:

> We doe it [petition] not out of any self conceit, or pride of heart, as seeking to equall ourselves with Men, either in Authority or wisdom: But according to our places to discharge that duty we owe to God, and the cause of the Church, as farre as lyeth in us, following herein the example of the Men, which have gone in this duty before us.[234]

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[231] "A True Copie of the Petition of the Gentlewomen, and Tradesmen-wives" (London, 1641), 2. Their holy nature allowed them to make this argument although it held dangerous egalitarian consequences for politics.

[232] Ibid, 6.

[233] Ibid, 6.

[234] Ibid, 7.

The English Civil War and its aftermath own a prominent position in history due to their production of some of the finest political thinkers and canonical writers in intellectual history. James Daybell wrote in 2004 that recognizing the level of female involvement in this movement "necessitates redefining what actually constituted politics, as well as recognition of women's roles and activities as 'political'."[235] This period marked a significant effort of both genders to make sense of the turmoil of the government and its claim to authority. Both men and women participated in the discussion of the nature of a legitimate right to rule. Women employed three main techniques for speaking politically: they used their legitimate religious voice, they assumed the role of concerned wife and mother, and they invoked their individual rights as subjects of the nation. These dramatically different approaches illustrate the ambivalence women felt as to their proper role within society.

Women demonstrated very politically astute ideas in both private and public spheres during the mid-seventeenth century even when not set in the context of religion. Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing claim that "Women considered themselves to be citizens, members of their society, with rights and duties, and demonstrated a degree of

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[235] James Daybell, "Introduction: Rethinking Women and Politics in Early Modern England" in James Daybell, ed., *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700* (Hampshire, Eng., 2004), 17. See also Christopher Orchard, "The Rhetoric of Corporeality and the Political Subject: Containing the Dissenting Female Body in Civil War England" in Susan Shifrin, ed., *Women as Sites of Culture: Women's Roles in Cultural Formation from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century* (Burlington, VT, 2002), 10-11. Orchard also discusses the outrage men felt at the inclusion of women into politics. Feminine passivity had always been used as analogy for social order and patriarchy. This reinforces Joan Kelly, *Women, History, and Theory* (Chicago, 1984), xvii, in which Kelly asserts that "The personal is political."

sophistication in their political actions and protests."[236] The events of the war directly affected their lives and moved them to voice their opinions. Lucy Hutchinson particularly had a problem with King Charles' political absolutism, but she could not see a viable alternative. However, she wrote, "King Charles was temperate chaste, and serious…the most obstinate person in his self-will that ever was, and so bent upon being an absolute uncontrollable sovereign that he was resolved either to be such a king or none."[237] Hutchinson's understanding of the complexities of a constitutional monarchy probably developed due to the responsibility she held of informing her husband of current events throughout the country, as many other women also did for their husbands. Hutchinson idealistically desired a republican government, and her memoirs describe her sense of betrayal by both the Stuarts and Oliver Cromwell in their inability to lead the nation effectively and fairly. She particularly illustrates her disillusionment with Cromwell's Protectorate by saying that "Victors and vanquished were equal slaves" and the government was "wanton with their power," which she saw as arbitrary and corrupt.[238]

During the Civil War, both male and female writers promoted ideas in pamphlets frequently. In fact, most of the discussion on the nature of politics took place in personal correspondence, pamphlets, or newspapers. Historian Hannah Barker claimed that the press played a large role in forming the identity and promoting

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[236] Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 243. They also mention that earlier in the century, women had the capability to vote in Parliament due to their property ownership.

[237] Hutchinson, *Memoirs*, 2. Hutchinson later described her awareness of the Cromwell's corruption and described her disturbance at his "ambition" and "his idolaters." 184.

[238] Hutchinson, *Memoirs*, 209-213.

conversation on topics that would change the ideological justifications used for the status quo of seventeenth-century England.[239] Several individuals directly engaged in discourses on the philosophy of government. Writers commonly wrote about the conflicting concepts of legitimate and arbitrary power. Women also took part in these debates. In 1646, Bathsua Pell Makin authored a petition addressing the abuse of power by the contemporary government. "The Malady and Remedy of Vexations and Unjust Arrests and Actions to Parliament" demanded the abolition of debtors prisons on libertarian grounds.[240] This debate on the possession of legitimate authority had many implications for gender that male writers never considered. If men claimed that the inferiority of women granted men power over them, and yet if all power was arbitrary, then women had as many rights to challenge that authority as men.

Various political debates ensued throughout the literature of the Civil War that contributed to the uncertainty of order. For example, Joseph Jane also questioned contemporary politics by examining the nature of treason. He asked whether treason against the king or the king's treason against the people represented the most unethical and intolerable crime. He saw the king's actions as more erroneous because the king had shown improper allegiances "through his whole Treatise, which is a Treason against

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[239] Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics, and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, Eng., 1998), 5. Although the bulk of the book concerns a much later date, Barker deals with the history of print culture in early modern England.

[240] Mary Ellen Waithe, *Modern Women Philosophers, 1600-1900 (*Boston, 1991), 211. Waithe argues that this approach demonstrates a strong political action for anyone, male or female.

God, and Man, Religion, Truth, and Justice."[241] These types of intellectual discourses would change the way the world was ordered.

Most men disagreed with the idea that women should directly participate in political action. A compilation of laws pertaining to women published in 1632 states bluntly that "They [women] make no laws, they consent to none, they abrogate none."[242] This statement can be interpreted in two ways: that the husband has the responsibility of speaking for the wife or that the wife does not hold enough value to be represented. In addition, men commonly felt that a ruler, or any politician, had to act harshly and sternly to effectively govern the unruly English population.

Women's participation in the political realm led to much anxiety among men, yet Phyllis Mack estimated that thousands of women petitioned Parliament in the mid-seventeenth century.[243] Henry Neville wrote "The Parlament of Ladies" in 1647 as a satire of women with political power like those petitioners. It does not seem to have been intended for any political purpose other than the demeaning of women to lessen men's anxiety. Historian Christopher Orchard claims that Neville viewed the political action of women as sexual and an attempt to subvert order.[244] Orchard's observation fits well with the discussion of Chapter II concerning the contemporary belief that women

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[241] Joseph Jane, "The Image Unbroaken: a Perspective of the Impudence, Falshood, vanitie, and Prophannes" (1651), 4.

[242] *The Law's Resolution of Women's Rights* (London, 1632), in Joan Larsen Klein, ed., *Daughters, Wives, and Widows: Writings by Men about Women and Marriage in England* (Chicago, 1992), 32. See also Jack Goody, *The Development of Marriage and Family* (Cambridge, 1983), 65. Goody argued that local customs tended to treat women better than the ecclesiastical or secular law prescribed due to the simple fact that women often outlived men. Also of note is Keith Thomas "The Double Standard," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20, No. 2 (1959), 203. Thomas pointed out the important part of the law stating a husband could "use violence and physical restraint to secure the person and services of his wife."

[243] Mack, *Visionary Women*, 53.

[244] Orchard, "The Rhetoric of Corporeality," 15.

only entered the public realm in search of power and women were only capable of achieving power through sex. Neville introduces the work with a passage stating that the women involved ordered their proceeding published "to prevent all such misreport and Scandals, as either malice or want of wit…to dishonor of their said Votes and Proceedings."[245] The fictional women demanded political power with their only "voice" of material wealth by deciding upon the pay of soldiers. Neville illustrates the fear of disorder and of women's usurpation of men's roles when the women attack Parliament as "divers weak Persons [who] have crept into Places beyond their Abilities."[246] As a final denigration of women, he concludes with the women passing a proclamation demanding "Due Benevolence" of their husbands: if the husband is gone, he owes his wife sexual attention "as much as [his] strength and constitution allows."[247] Not only does Neville touch upon the fear of disorder, he also uses the belief that women only enter public space for sexual purposes to make fun of politically active women.

When "A True Copie of the Petition of the Gentlewomen, and Tradesmanwives" was presented to Parliament in 1641, the women received an official response from John Pym to "Turne your Petition which you have delivered here, into Prayers at home for us."[248] This response illustrates that although the women's claims about the welfare of the state and the church had validity, Parliament wanted the women firmly in the private

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[245] Henry Neville, "The Parlament of Ladies" (London, 1647), A2.
[246] Ibid, 11.
[247] Ibid, 21.
[248] "True Copie", 7. This statement corresponds to an argument of Christopher Orchard, "The Rhetoric of Corporeality," 10. Orchard contends that men attempted to undermine women's political actions consciously, with writings and speeches, and unconsciously, with Parliamentary responses such as this. See also Anne Laurence "Women's Work and the English Civil War", *History Today* 42 (1992), 24. Laurence further argued that the only appropriate political action of women was necessary economic survival.

and feminine sphere of home. Philosopher Jacques Du Bosc had previously complained of the injustice of arguments such as this: "It is also a tyranny and a custom which is no less unjust than old, to reject them [women] from the public government, as if their spirits were not as capable of affairs of importance as that of men."[249]

Women utilized many diverse strategies in attaining a political voice during the seventeenth century. In their writings, the subtle political rhetoric that pervades the pieces displays the role that politics played within their lives and how they understood the process to work. Aristocratic women could often gain influence through their rank and the persuasion of kinsmen and male friends. However, middling women typically wrote letters and petitions to voice their discontent.

The average women used three strategies to attain a political voice: religious justification, concern as a wife and mother, and assertion of their rights as individual subjects. Religious legitimization has been previously discussed. The concerned wife/mother role meant that women constantly had to explain their personal stake in political affairs to account for their increasing attempts at participation; these attempts usually included their expressions of desire to halt the war, receive widows' pensions, and attain the release of their husbands. Women included many statements such as "The thoughts of which sad and barbarous events…forcing us humbly to Petition…to make safe provision for your selves and us; before it be too late."[250] These phrases reveal much into their understanding of their place within society as women. Mary Overton, wife of prolific pamphleteer Richard Overton, wrote a legal appeal for the release of her

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[249] Jacques Du Bosc, *The Complete Woman*, 274.
[250] "True Copie", 2

family and herself. She unashamedly and easily states her ideas of a government's main role in the lives about the people; she asserts that a just government must, above all, protect its citizens.[251] Although she assumes her husband has been accused of contempt, she identified the abuse of power in the lack of any official charges for their imprisonment. Purkiss suggests that the violent actions taken against Mary Overton represent an attack on all mothers of England meant to reinforce national masculinity. However, Overton's husband perceived the treatment as an attack on his personal masculinity, since protection of a wife and children constituted a primary function of the private male identity.[252]

Another petition presented to Parliament by women in 1642 strongly identified the authors as concerned wives desiring a "Finall Conclusion of these Civill Wars, and the restitution and revocation of their HUSBANDS."[253] The innocuous strategy of speaking as a concerned wife seems very traditional and within the accepted confines of a woman's place in safeguarding the family and home. However, using this justification to petition in the public political sphere presented a new twist for society and muddled the boundaries between private and public affairs. This petition, full of mention of "Virgins", "Sweet-hearts", and "suffering", seems to invoke ideas of purity and pity. The petitioners begin their argument by invoking the popular biblical images of Adam and Eve, but they soon diverge from conventional concepts of women by invoking the

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[251] Mary Overton, "The humble Appeale and Petition of Mary Overton, Prisoner in Bridewell" (London, 1643), 1. Overton's exact words were "whereas the public safety and liberty of the *people* is the maine end of all Government."

[252] Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics during the English Civil War* (New York, 2005), 28. Overton was dragged through the streets clutching her newborn baby.

[253] "The Humble Petition of Many Thousands of Wives and Matrons" (London, 1642), 1.

importance of wives to the Commonwealth. The authors maintain that "First, it is not unknowne to the whole kingdome of England, that Wives are the main supporters of the strength and beauty thereof…and the producers of good Subjects."[254] They later acknowledge their weakness and need of men: "And it is not a pittifull case, able to make a mans bowels yearne with compassion, that women should out of their frailty find, and have no man to take them up."[255] This approach demanded the recognition of women and their claims without challenging patriarchy or any prevailing gender ideology.

Several other women understood not only the current politics of the English Civil War but also the deeper philosophical struggle for claims to legitimate authority. Elizabeth Poole spoke to Oliver Cromwell and a Parliamentary council of the idea that a ruler was masculine and the nation-state was feminine in 1648-9. She said, "The King is your Father and husband, which you were and are to obey in the Lord."[256] In her eyes, the existing political organization meant that the Parliament acted as the feet, with the king being the head of the government and the people. This analogy seemed evident on the surface, but on examination Poole's clear analysis meant that Parliament must identify with women. She even suggested that Parliament should "divorce" the king.[257] To further complicate matters, after the war, Anne Wentworth linked domestic abuse of a husband against a wife with abuse by a government of its people.[258] Yet, the

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[254] Ibid, 3.
[255] Ibid, 5.
[256] Poole, "A Vision," 167.
[257] Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent*, 116.
[258] Ibid, 2.

government granted abused women no legal recourse so this idea was not likely to be pondered, much less accepted, by the masculine government.

These select women went beyond challenging assumptions of femininity to reinterpreting masculine roles. The most dramatic approach women took in attaining a political voice involved the extreme tactic of invoking their rights as subjects of the nation. To do so, they confronted the first issue of justifying their actions as political agents. Women always had to prove and defend their interest in the welfare of the nation. Then, they felt free to criticize the state of affairs much as men did. Sometimes women argued that they deserved recognition as subjects due to their activities during the war, when they acted as spies, built fortifications, and raised money. The most ingenious arguments harshly attacked Parliament. As mentioned previously, Mary Overton argued that a government exists to protect the people, and "the Law respecteth nothing more than the Liberty and Freedom of a mans person."[259] She maintained that Parliament had been suspending the law in favor of promoting war. She wrote her appeal much like a current legal brief with two pages of precedent followed by a complaint. Due to an "Arbitrary Order from the House of Lords," soldiers had dragged her through the streets while she held her baby; this represented "an act that is abhorred of God, of Nature, of Nations, yes of the most wild and barbarous Heathens, of Turks, Infidels, and Pagans."[260] Another female prisoner also spoke contemptuously of the manner in which the government behaved. Anna Trapnel portrayed herself as a woman-at-home forced to take authority amid the chaos of society. She argued that she became

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[259] Overton, “The humble Appeale,” 2.
[260] Ibid, 7.

a "persecuted political authority" due to the Parliament's motive of protecting the monopoly of influence by elite men.[261] This proto-feminist argument demonstrates the way in which the boundaries between genders had blurred within the context of the war in every aspect of life. This imprecision of the defined gendered spheres was very apparent in the realms of defense, religion, and politics. Significantly, the women participating in these endeavors had nothing in common except their biological sex. The expectations of men for women and the boundary between masculine and feminine had blurred, which allowed women to publicly act in masculine domains and demonstrate their capacity to express themselves in an attempt to improve their individual situation.

[261] Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent*, 96-101.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: POST-WAR ANALYSIS

The Civil War affected the understanding of gender in both progressive and regressive ways. English women as a group became, more than ever, targeted as a source of disorder and labeled as a possible cause of the social confusion of the war. Yet this period also allowed several women to develop an identity for themselves as individuals with inherent worth and subsequent rights, independent of their family and husbands. Karen Offen has asserted that the explosion of feminism in the early eighteenth century owed many of its ideas to the Englishwomen of the seventeenth century.[262] Englishwomen continued to receive an education and write prolifically.

Despite this philosophical progress, by the end of the century, women as a collective group were once again segregated within the church, prohibited from several economic trades, and forbidden to act politically. Phyllis Mack explains this shift of toleration and acceptance to segregation and exclusion as it affected the religious realm: "As bulwarks of social propriety and religious conformity…destabilized…female spirituality acquired an increasingly subversive connotation."[263] A determination not to experience the upheaval of the war in the future led to the articulation of strict social roles for men and women and to a reinforcement of social order, which limited the

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[262] Karen Offen, European *Feminisms 1700–1950: A Political History* (Stanford, Ca., 2000), ii-x.
[263] Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth Century England* (Berkeley, Ca., 1992), 55.

behaviors of both sexes. In this restoration of order after 1660, women proved much easier to control than dangerous challenges to legitimate power within the government.

Diane Purkiss claims that the rush to rebuild order with the Restoration represented an attempt by the survivors to make sense of the actions of the recent past. Historical wars had been described as scenes of "barbarity, chaos, and disorder,"[264] yet the men of England would not admit that they had participated in such an uncontrolled event. The Clarendon Code and Stuart Poor Laws symbolize direct attempts by the government to halt the growth of what had temporarily been a mobile and fluid society. This fluidity of society had allowed gender boundaries to blur, and women to transgress these boundaries. Keith Thomas argued that the growth of religious sects during the war and the relative independence they granted to women led to conflicts in family loyalty, which had the socially undesirable effect of loosening the bonds that held society together.[265] Certainly, the authorities viewed the presence of women in the public realm as harmful to society.

The easiest way to have power over a sex, or any subordinate group, is by denying it the ability and knowledge to recognize its oppression and act to challenge it. However, seventeenth-century women continued to dissent from their subordinate position, as they had throughout the century. Many women, such as Mary Astell and Margaret Cavendish, understood the destructive cycle of ignorance about the intellectual justification of their subordinate status that ensnared so many women. Women writers

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[264] Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics during the English Civil War* (New York, 2005), 41.

[265] Keith Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects," *Past and Present,* No. 13 (1958), 52.

pointed to the irrationality that men encouraged and praised women for the very same vices for which men degraded women. In addition, women learned early to be attractive to men, yet men denounced attractive women for tempting them. This paradoxical state of affairs could only be resolved with proper education, specifically the ability to think independently. Many women gained an independent identity and understanding of their personal capacity due to their experiences in the war, which is evident in their post-war writings. Several of these post-war writings argue explicitly against the gender hierarchy.

Margaret Cavendish, for example, identified two types of women within war-torn England in her work of 1662, *Youths Glory and Deaths Banquet*: those who controlled language and those without access to it.[266] As an educated and socially aware woman, she saw the need for unity despite men's attempts to divide women in the competition for husbands. Knowing that women would be reluctant to rebel against the only way of life that they had known, Cavendish wrote, "I believe all of my own Sex will be against me."[267] However, Cavendish, Astell, and others all understood the rationale advanced by men for the prescribed place women held within the gender hierarchy, although they expressed disappointment at the dismal prospects for any change to the status quo of English society. Most women simply had to depend on men although these men treated

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[266] Jacqueline Pearson, "'Women May Discourse…as Well as Men': Speaking and Silent Women in the Plays of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle", *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 4, No. 1 (1985), 42. Pearson analyzed the prevalence of this theme in Cavendish's writings. Pearson concluded, "The two main plots further her central theme by contrasting the two favorite Cavendish types- the woman who controls language and the woman who is, or seems to be, cut off from it."

[267] Margaret Cavendish, "Preface," *Worlds Olio* (London: 1653) in Jerome Nadelhaft, "The Englishwoman's Sexual Civil War: Feminist Attitudes towards Men, Women, and Marriage, 1650-1740" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 43, No. 4 (1982), 575.

them badly. One of Cavendish's characters laments bitterly, "Men, that are not only our *Tyrants*, but our *Devils*, keep us in the Hell of *Subjection*, from whence I cannot perceive any Redemption, or getting out."[268] She argued, much as women would centuries later, that the origins of female oppression lay in men's use of physical strength to guarantee dominance, a very unjust basis for a civilized society.

Mary Astell also argued that remaining in ignorance of the world and society equaled the worst sin a woman could commit, since it reinforced subjugation, made a woman unable to resist the evils presented by men, and left them vulnerable for attacks on their follies, which is all they know. Despite her status as a devout Anglican and Royalist, which represented two of the most patriarchal institutions of her day, Astell wrote in praise of female ambition and the need for recognition for women's abilities and achievements. Like Cavendish, Astell displays a deep cynicism about the possibility for change in the social structure.[269] Astell encouraged women to be "as wise as Angels" and "ennobl[e] your minds with such Graces as really deserve it."[270] Astell's

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[268] Margaret Cavendish, *Orations of Divers Sorts Accommodated to Divers Places* (2nd edition, London: 1668), in Nadelhaft, "The Englishwoman's Sexual Civil War," 577. Cavendish also began to stress more vehemently that women are "not innately inferior but lacking education." See Pearson, "Women May Discourse," 44. Pearson described Cavendish's endeavor, "Cavendish describes the oppression of women, their lack of education, the pressure on them to conform to stereotypes, the danger they faced from male violence and power. First and foremost, she reveals, through her own example as well as through her dramatic heroines, the problems faced by a woman fighting for access to man's language."

[269] Mary Astell, *Reflections upon marriage* in *The first English feminist: reflections upon marriage and other writings.* Ed Bridget Hill (New York, 1986), 121-2. Astell shows how difficult it is to reason with a woman who is socialized to want only a man.

[270] Mary Astell, A *Serious Proposal to the Ladies* in *The first English feminist: reflections upon marriage and other writings.* Ed Bridget Hill (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 140. Astell continues to argue that by following the "Tyrant Custom" of ignorance, women perpetuate the absurdity of their subservience.

Reflections describe how horrible a marriage may become and promotes spinsterhood as a viable alternative for a woman's life.

Many women encouraged intellectual independence and intelligence as admirable characteristics in a female. Lady Ann North wrote weekly to her daughter Anne concerning the rearing of her granddaughter throughout the 1670s expressing views such as "I am glad pretty Missy is so much a woman as to be able to speak her mind."[271] Few would have considered this a promising trait in the early seventeenth century before the war. Furthermore, Bathsua Pell Makin, an influential intellectual with ties to the aristocracy through her role as tutor to Princess Elizabeth, wrote after the war of the continual need to educate females, but she stressed that men would always remain the prime authority as long as they deserved it. She wrote to women, "God hath made the Man the Head, if you be educated and instructed…you will acknowledge it, and be satisfied that you are help, that your Husbands do consult and advise with you (which if you be wife they will be glad of)."[272] This essay seems to placate men, showing that no threat exists, while arguing for a stronger education for women. Even more importantly, an intelligent wife as a life partner would ease the burden of household production for all. Makin censured society and its practices of obvious injustice and discrimination toward women. She began her work, "An Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen" of 1673 by saying that "Custom, when it is inveterate hath a mighty

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[271] Cited in Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing, eds., *Women's World in Seventeenth Century England: A Sourcebook* (New York, 2000), 207.

[272] Bathsua Pell Makin, "An Essay to Revive the Antient Education" (London, 1673), 4. Makin stressed the point that smart mothers lead to smarter nations.

influence: it hath the force of Nature it self."[273] She continued her persuasive polemic by observing that

> The Barbarous custom to breed Women low is grown general amongst us, and hath prevailed so far, that it is verily believed…that Women are not endued with such Reason, as Men; nor capable of improvement by Education, as they are.[274]

These arguments resound with pre-war complaints of "Haec Vir" about the use of custom and tradition to justify current attitudes.[275]

However, other post-war pamphlets by men resumed the light and patronizing tone toward women. One such example of a satirical and comedic collection, "The Ladies Dictionary," supposedly based on the author's experience with previous lovers, stresses its use for women on the topics of "DOMESTICK AFFAIRS, BEAUTIFYING, PRESERVING, CANDYING, PHYSICK, CHIRURGERY, &C."[276] Even James Strong's "Joanereidos," which had celebrated active women during the war, included a derogatory passage when republished in 1674. The introduction calls it "The Masculine-Feminine Poem of Mr. James Strong, Poet Hermophrodite."[277] There seems to have been a vindictive backlash against the assertive actions of women after the civil war.

The historiography of seventeenth-century England and the English Civil War has undergone dramatic shifts in its search for the causes of the period's social upheaval. These shifts, along with the growth of gender history, have significantly altered the way

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[273] Ibid, 3.
[274] Ibid, 3.
[275] "Hic Mulier and Haec Vir", C1. The author argues that men wrongly base arguments for their superiority on custom rather than reason: "To conclude Custome is an Idiot."
[276] N.H, "The Ladies' Dictionary, Being a General Entertainment for the Fair Sex," (London, 1694), 3.
[277] James Strong, "Joanereidos: or Feminine Valour Eminently Discovered in Western Women (1645, repr. 1674), 7.

in which history has understood women, culture, and society amid the English Civil War. Although women's historians of the 1970s, such as Ann Gordon, Mari Jo Buble, and Nancy Shrom Dye, understood that "womanhood" did not signify a biological fact of civilization, they did not understand the concept of gender fluidity. With an understanding of the social construct of "gender" and its importance for social order, it is now possible to better comprehend women's actions during the war. Phyllis Mack labeled the period of the mid-seventeenth century as a "woman's time" due to the increase in possibilities for them, although women never received a new collective position or status.[278] During mid-century, women found themselves in situations that offered rare opportunities to express themselves in unconventional and controversial ways. James Daybell has argued that "The early modern period, therefore, marked an epoch of women's political influence."[279] Following the war, however, women came under even firmer masculine control with the reinvigoration of the concept of citizenship as only masculine.

Many historians have misunderstood the actions of women at this time. For example, Roger Hudson erroneously states that the women of his compilation of memoirs primarily concerned themselves with "dowries, husbands and fathers, incomes, child birth, illness, [and] family ties."[280] The memoirs included in his compilation

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[278] Mack, *Visionary Women*, 122.

[279] James Daybell, "Introduction: Rethinking Women and Politics in Early Modern England," in James Daybell, ed., *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700* (Hampshire, Eng., 2004), 3.

[280] Roger Hudson, *The Grand Quarrel: Women's Memoirs of the English Civil War* (Gloucestershire, Eng., 2000), xv. *The Grand Quarrel* includes writings by Margaret Cavendish, Lucy Hutchinson, Brilliana Harley, Anne Fanshawe, Anne Halkett, and Alice Thornton, all of whom wrote with great insight into politics, religion, and society.

contradict this statement. This work includes many women writing of their concern about the state of the nation and their gender, not just their families. Another formerly popular explanation for the behavior of women during this period claimed that men manipulated women. Even if true, the claim that active women represented "dupes of wily men" threatens ideas of masculinity in that men relied so heavily upon women.[281] Women were supposed to be inferior to men in all aspects and incapable of acting independently. Yet, if men had to resort to using women to protect their interests, they lost the independent power that made them masculine, and, by contemporary standards, a man. Although the beginning and the end of the seventeenth century seem similar with respect to the treatment of women, the major social changes of the English Civil War temporarily blurred the boundaries of gender, allowing women to undertake traditionally "masculine" endeavors and then convert back to "feminine" roles as seen in Chapter IV.

The subordination of women resulted from a conscious effort by men. Jerome Nadelhaft suggests that "They kept women ignorant, denied them role models by controlling written history, and prevented women from appreciating the full horrors of their situation."[282] However, many women did persevere and discover the injustice of their lives, and they spoke out. Historians' focus on the educational restrictions placed upon women during the mid-seventeenth century prompted Maria Magro to criticize feminist scholarship for neglecting the writings of radical sects and studying the relationship between revolutionary culture and early modern feminism. Specifically,

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[281] Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, 57-60.

[282] Nadelhaft, 575. He began his work with a criticism of historians that neglect women's criticisms and those that imply that women lacked the courage or ability to defend themselves. 556

Magro argues that sectarian women's use of religion to enter politics marked a significant advance for women's rights. She believes that historians who separate religion and politics have neglected this point.[283] Bonnie Smith states that historians' reluctance to allow women's accomplishments to flourish undermines the "truth value" of history."[284] James Daybell also argues that women played a large part in history and have been consciously ignored: "In traditional political narratives, women are marginal figures: their domain, the household or 'domestic' sphere, rather than the public, male world of business and politics; the roles they played often consigned to footnotes."[285]

The way that Lucy Hutchinson's *Memoirs* have been treated over the centuries provides an interesting analogy to the way contemporary societies have viewed women and their capabilities over time. Modes of self-expression have been interpreted differently in different eras to reinforce society's contemporary values.[286] Hutchinson was a "pioneer historian," but her contemporaries viewed her as a literary figure rather than an intellectual. She successfully melded the genres of history and romance (or life writing) so society would accept her work. Through time, scholars shifted the attention

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[283] Maria Magro, "Spiritual Autobiography and Radical Sectarian Women's Discourse: Anna Trapnel and the Bad Girls of the English Revolution," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 2, No. 34 (2004), 407.

[284] Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, Ma., 1998), 2. She possibly refers to ambivalent statements such as Roger Hudson's introduction, "any endeavour to recruit these ladies for the feminist cause is, on the face of it, a defiance of the evidence…But by the very act of writing, or, in Brilliana Harley's case, fighting, these women were in fact doing something to question the submissive stereotype.", xx.

[285] Daybell, "Introduction," 1.

[286] Susan Lamb, "Applauding Shakespeare's Ophelia in the Eighteenth Century: Sexual Desire, Politics, and the Good Woman," in Susan Shifrin, ed., *Women as Sites of Culture: Women's Roles in Cultural Formation from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century* (Burlington, Vt., 2002), 106. Lamb specifically analyzed the manner in which Shakespeare's Ophelia has been understood as a virgin or a whore depending upon cultural ideas of sexuality.

given to her work from her political statements to her wifely obedience.[287] When Hutchinson's work emerged in the nineteenth century, she became a national treasure who had written an elegant and unaffected autobiography. Recently, scholars have studied her works as more than a private reflective work. As Magro states, "*Memoirs* has resurfaced as a text that illustrates women's rejection of mainstream national histories."[288]

One such national history is Lord Clarendon's celebrated *History of the Great Rebellion*. Lord Clarendon wrote a polemic of the English Civil War to justify his involvement as Advisor to Charles I and Lord Chancellor to Charles II. Although Clarendon's extreme conservatism stands in stark contrast to Hutchinson's more radical ideology, the similarity of their writings has yet to be studied. Both authors use many value words, judgmental descriptions and religion to explain the war, but Hutchinson actually gives a more detailed account of the military and political facts of the war. In fact, Hutchinson wrote much more like Clarendon than she did like her critical foil, Margaret Cavendish.[289] Scholars value Clarendon's work as a professional endeavor into history while women's writings have been called amateur. Women's writing tends to include immanence, trauma, and evocative stories. If they attempted to write academically, society viewed them as pariahs. Bonnie Smith maintains that women's works had to include cultural elements such as artistic and intellectual achievements

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[287] Hudson, *The Grand Quarrel,* 159. Hudson sees the Memoirs as proof of a "steadfast couple's determination to go their own way through these troubled times."

[288] Magro, "Spiritual Autobiography," 31.

[289] Lord Edward Hyde Clarendon, *The History of the Great Rebellion,* ed. Roger Lockyer (London, 1967), 56. Like Hutchinson, Clarendon includes many statements such as "There can not be too often mention of the wonderful providence of God."

rather than political narratives. On the other hand, men wrote of new discoveries of knowledge with a "tamer narrative."[290]

The repercussions of challenging the gender order have received the attention of historians. Natalie Davis first studied the way in which sexual inversion could display historical realities. When women seized power and demanded attention, they effectively challenged the social order and displayed popular unrest.[291] The English Civil War brought undeveloped and controversial ideas such as arbitrary power, individual rights, and gender hierarchies into the forefront of discussion in England. The dramatic events of the seventeenth century prompted many to open a dialogue about the legitimacy of the contemporary social order. This public discourse had significant consequences for both men and women, but in the aftermath of the war women lost any claim they might have to public authority, religious or otherwise, and men reestablished their right to govern their homes. For example, the Quakers immediately reinvented themselves as friends of the monarchy and changed their power structure from a shared system of equality to authoritarianism. Like much of the population, the Quakers decided to organize in this manner to stop any persecution under the new monarchy. The accepted response to any sort of dissent or difference was now harsh enough to force conformity onto the population. Although the Restoration did not ultimately succeed in its goal of restoring

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[290] Bonnie Smith, *The Gender of History*, 62-69. Smith claims that the devaluation of women's historical writing results from the idea of history as masculine pursuit. The use of emotion in women's writing has traditionally marked it as unprofessional, although she points out that oppression cannot be discussed without emotion or criticism.

[291] Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, Ca., 1975), 136, 150-1.

political, religious, and social order, it did enforce more rigidly defined gender roles and punish deviations from these prescribed behaviors.

As patriarchy came under attack after the Restoration, many intellectuals began to debate liberal political theories. Laura Gowing maintained that this unique and public process could only occur due to the familiarity of the public with the political system.[292] The decades following the English Civil War had dramatically revealed the dilemma of patriarchy: how can the king emphasize his absolute power but still preserve a father's property and freedom? Political historians Teresa Brennan and Carole Pateman attempted to reconcile the many tentative ideologies that tried to resolve this complexity. Thomas Hobbes proposed that authority must be based on convention and consent of the governed, with consent symbolized through submission. He implied that man dominates woman with war.[293] Robert Filmer, probably influenced by the same events as Hobbes, used the idea of "sexual dominance" to base the origins of government and justify patriarchy. However, the law itself could easily be interpreted to say that women possess freedom, since they are not slaves or criminals, as Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing point out.[294]

John Locke's social contract theory emerged from the necessity of a new political philosophy capable of functioning with capitalism, a market economy, and the liberal construction of the state, all of which eighteenth-century England would have to

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[292] Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (New York, 1998).

[293] Teresa Brennan and Carole Pateman, "'Mere Auxiliaries to the Commonwealth': Women and the Origins of Liberalism," *Political Studies* 27, No. 2 (1979), 187-8.

[294] Crawford and Gowing, *Women's World*, 243.

confront. To simplify, Locke maintained that men had the individual capacity of rationality to help the nation, or practice civic virtue, as long as the nation helped them to prosper. Mark Kann interpreted these new rights of men as conditional upon the sacrifices of women and young men. Kann wrote, "They rely on constructions of womanhood to urge [women] to sacrifice their own individuality to tame men's appetites and ensure that men heed the nation's call to arms."[295] However, Brennan and Pateman claim that Locke's social contract theory ignores the idea of "patriarchy" an instead clarifies and systemizes the ideology into a more defined set of boundaries.[296] This obvious contradiction between the nature of patriarchy and its role in government was never resolved with the war.

The strengthening of the system of patriarchal thought following the upheaval of the war and Protectorate held significant consequences for the understanding of gender and the treatment of women. Diane Purkiss persuasively claims that "The Civil War made the nature and legitimation of masculine power a principal political issue in a manner that was to infect the political debate for centuries thereafter."[297] With the subsequent reorganization of religious sects, churches began to once again segregate women from men. Probably influenced by the current stream of the degradation of women, even the Quakers started to fear women's capacity to subvert the innate good of

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[295] Mark E. Kann, *On the Man Question: Gender and Civic Virtue in America (*Philadelphia, 1991) 4, ix. Kann identifies the problem that Locke attempted to resolve as the need to grant males more power but enable some type of restriction due to innate passion and selfishness.

[296] Brennan and Pateman, "Mere Auxiliaries," 184. They argue that Locke had to ignore patriarchy due to the conception that individual freedom and equality was central to his theory yet inconsistent with the current practice of patriarchy. There was simply no way to explain the subordinate position of women.

[297] Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, 234.

man. Most of the explanations for placing increased restrictions upon women's actions revolved around sexuality. Purkiss explains that the goal of existence was "masculine self-replication," which required female passivity; however, society never resolved the idea of the need for female activity in the act of conception.[298] Instead, a popular myth resurfaced of active and transgressive women creating monsters. Quite simply, when a woman overstepped her prescribed gender role, it upset the order of the universe and led to a disfigured birth.[299] After the catastrophes experienced by the nation with a civil war, this personal threat resounded with members of both sexes, and it shows how authorities manipulated fear for social control.

However, women did not forget the lessons of the war. Katherine Gillespie maintained that "Dissenting women's voices formed an important, though largely unacknowledged, contribution to a grass-roots early modern movement for abstract individualism."[300] Unfortunately, the new theories that developed as a result of the war and that allowed for increased individualism did not apply to women. The English Civil War had forced governmental authorities to justify their right to rule; Locke's social contract theory allowed citizens the right to consent to be governed. However, women had little ground as citizens. Jerome Nadelhaft describes the context of intellectual feminism as a "natural consequence of the Civil War when power, allegiance, liberty,

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[298] Ibid, 166. Purkiss's passage discusses the post-war understanding of women's participation in the war; she links public and active women in cultural imagination to the renewal of myths about monsters and witches.

[299] Susan Lamb, "Applauding Shakespeare's Ophelia in the Eighteenth Century: Sexual Desire, Politics, and the Good Woman" in Susan Shifrin, ed., *Women as Sites of Culture: Women's Roles in Cultural Formation from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century* (Burlington, Vt., 2002), 112-4.

[300] Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent*, 174.

and slavery became subjects of debate."[301] Along with the political discussion of arbitrary power came new insights that if people were not made to serve a ruler, then women were not made to serve a husband.

Gender perceptions shifted after the war due to several factors. The evolution of the nation-state and rise of capitalism restricted women's economic activities, and this made them worth less in monetary terms. In addition, the new conception of citizenship and public service espoused in the new liberal philosophies was selectively altered to apply only to males. A further differentiation of the sexes and redefinition of gender occurred by the eighteenth century. A good woman simply equaled a good Christian, but a good man was a good citizen. Christopher Orchard maintains that the political reform of the late seventeenth century equaled a masculine reaction to women's political involvement during the war.[302] A major shift definitely occurred as men segregated women in most areas of public life. Mack argues that women agreed with the need for stable organization and rigid gender roles to create an orderly society.[303] Even when contemporary writers criticized these gender stereotypes, they left the basic ideas of fundamental differences between the sexes intact. This simple differentiation had several effects. On a positive note, women began to create a collective identity and unify using logic rationales of their commonalties; this is a necessary step for

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[301] Nadelhaft, "The Englishwoman's Sexual Civil War," 558.

[302] Christopher Orchard, "The Rhetoric of Corporeality and the Political Subject: Containing the Dissenting Female Body in the Civil War England" in Susan Shifrin, ed., *Women as Sites of Culture: Women's Roles in Cultural Formation from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century* (Burlington, Vt., 2002), 9. See also Anne Laurence, "Women's Work and the English Civil War," *History Today* 42 (1992), 25. She argues that women's public participation corresponded to their blame for the war and concludes that the war "limited, rather than expanded, the opportunities open to them."

[303] Mack, *Visionary Women*, 311.

progressive action. However, when the separation of men and women occurred, a "system of civilized but comprehensive repression"[304] happened with less possible resistance.

Judith Butler argues that "Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived…genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically incredible."[305] This observation may shed insight into the perceptions of the sexes during the Civil War. The ambiguous and ambivalent expectations and roles of women as feminine cannot be adequately defined. Certainly, no evidence exists that women intended to subvert morality or destroy political authority, but their public display of individuality and personal worth threatened the order by which English society had understood itself. The social convention of gender forced the ideological goals of the Civil War, such as the limitation of the power of the king, to change. Hilda Smith observed that "Seventeenth-century 'feminists' developed an independent criticism of their situation outside of the revolutionary and religious ideologies and groupings formed between 1640 and 1660."[306] She proposes that a women's movement posing questions about their status and based upon an educated and philosophical understanding of gender and individuality erupted independently of a reaction to the treatment they received at the hands of men.

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[304] Ibid, 364.

[305] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, 1999), 180.

[306] Hilda Smith, "Gynecology and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England" in Berenice A. Carroll, ed., *Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays* (Chicago, 1976), 47.

Ideas on gender fluctuated widely within seventeenth-century England. After the relative freedom of the war, women endured increasing limitations upon their public activities. Although segregated from men, these enforced categories helped women to form an educated identity of themselves as individuals and as a collective and oppressed group. Women were neither passive victims nor constant heroines in the English Civil War; they were human. Some ignored the prescribed norms of society while others unquestioningly followed them. There simply cannot be one generalization of how women acted, but it is very apparent that gender during the English Civil War was very fluid. It enabled women to act in ways outside their feminine boundaries.

Women from every walk of life simultaneously, yet individually, transgressed their prescribed gender role amid the disorder of the English Civil War. As the boundaries between genders blurred, the conceptions of woman shifted to allow women to enter the traditionally masculine public domain. Gerda Lerner wrote, "The true history of women is the history of their ongoing functioning in that male-defined world, *on their own terms*."[307] A woman's independence results from a realization and an identity that acknowledges her individual productive powers, whether biological, educational, or economical. This was the case for several women in the period of the English Civil War who recognized their individual worth. Unfortunately for the collective group, women had been labeled as a threat to the social order and a possible cause for the turmoil of the English Civil War. Gender roles were rigidly reinforced as a

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[307] Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: a 1975 Perspective" in Carroll, ed. *Liberating Women's History*, 359.

way to maintain stability, and the social constructs of gender were solidified for the path of the following centuries.

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